

Mill Cottage Montessori Nursery



Prospectus 2023-24

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Welcome to Mill Cottage Montessori

Thank you for expressing an interest in Mill Cottage Montessori Nursery. We are a private day care provision offering care and education for **children aged 0-5 years**. We understand that choosing the perfect setting for a child's early education is paramount to every parent, we also feel the same. We are an equal opportunities nursery which provides access for all. We offer a wide range of educational experiences through an extensive curriculum using the Montessori apparatus, including: Practical Life; Sensorial; Cultural; Mathematics; Language; Art and Music. Mill Cottage Montessori Nursery is proud to have achieved an overall '**Outstanding**' by **OFSTED** in January 2015 and May 2019 following an Early Years inspection which is a reflection of the hard work and dedication our staff team. Please see our most recent report here <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50082089>

School's Aims

Mill Cottage endeavors to give all children the best start in life; we therefore feel it is vital to provide a learning environment that is conducive to individual learning and development. The quality of children's educational experiences is at the core of our ethos; we are tenacious in our desire to continually develop all children with the knowledge and skills that equip them for life. Children thoroughly enjoy and participate in a broad range of inviting activities in a homely atmosphere in which they feel safe and secure. All activities are freely chosen through our natural free flow play philosophy which encourages children to become risk takers, builds their self-esteem, self-confidence and supports them in becoming motivated and interested to learn, whilst ensuring they are empowered to make excellent progress in their learning and development. Our highly qualified and professional team of practitioners are valued across all levels, with their multitude of skills, expertise and experience. They are truly dedicated, passionate and have a nurturing attitude towards the children, which is reflected in the calm classroom environment.

Practitioners provide support to children and their families, offering assistance with any aspect of early year's development, learning and education. We pride ourselves in our passion for childcare ensuring all children are valued, understood and respected. Mill Cottage Montessori Nursery aims to develop independent, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through multicultural awareness and respect for themselves, each other and the environment. Montessori Education encourages students around the world to become compassionate and life-long learners who are tolerant and understanding of all living things, with an ethos of: ***Tell me and I forget, Show me and I remember, Involve me and I understand.***

Our Staff Team at Mill Cottage

The staff team are highly qualified, experienced practitioners and Montessori teachers who share the same passion in child care and development. We are tenacious in our expectations to provide an excellent service to our families who entrust us with the care of their children. All our staff under-go rigorous vetting procedures to ensure their suitability to work with children. Each member of staff is first aid trained and has a basic food hygiene certificate. Our vision is to provide the utmost in quality care where children will thrive in a warm, friendly, stimulating and challenging environment.

Ailsa Neville – School Principal

Ailsa provides the leadership and quality of education in the setting. Montessori education became a passion for Ailsa since having children of her own. Montessori education became the driving force in her vision to set up and establish quality childcare and education and in 2005 this mission was accomplished. Ailsa has established a career of over 30 years experience caring for and educating children from 0 – 12 years.

Qualifications

- NNEB in Childcare
- British Sign Language level 2
- Montessori teaching diplomas 0-3 years, 3-6 years, 6-9 years, 9-12 years.
- Foundation Degree in Early Years -level 5
- Designated safeguarding Lead – Level 3
- BA (Hons) Degree Childhood Studies - level 6
- Master of Arts (MA) Education - level 7
- Fire Marshall
- Data protection Officer
- Health and Safety officer
- SENDCO

Kirsty Thompson - Deputy manager/ Montessori teacher / DDSL

Kirsty is responsible for Montessori teaching and learning with our 3 – 6 year olds. Kirsty has worked at Mill Cottage for 15 years and has developed her leadership and management role to become a senior leader in the setting. Kirsty is driven by her passion in the Montessori Method and is an excellent Montessori teacher and Early Years Practitioner.

Qualifications

- Montessori Teaching Diploma 3 - 6 years
- Montessori Teaching Diploma 6 - 9 years
- NVQ 2 and 3 Childcare
- Foundation Degree Early Years - level 5
- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

Nicola Higginbottom - Deputy Manager / Forest school teacher/ Montessori teacher/ DDSL

Nicola has spent most of her working career teaching at Mill Cottage (over 16 years) only leaving to do her studies at University and start her family.

Nicola is a highly experienced and dedicated teacher, early years practitioner and Montessori teacher, she enables excellent achievements with her class and facilitates programmes

of educational studies that incorporate fundamental British values and an education that is tailor made for individual learning and abilities.

Nicola is also our forest school lead role, she has adapted the outdoor area to provide an excellent outdoor learning environment for children of all ages. Nicola helps children to take carefully calculated risks in outdoor pursuits, challenging their physical development and understanding of the natural environment.

Qualifications

BTech level 3 in Early Years
Montessori teaching diploma
BA (hons) Early Primary Education
Qualified Teacher Status (QTS)
Forest school teacher level 2 and 3
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

Sara Caunce -Senior EYT/DDSL

Sara has several years experience managing and leading in schools and early years provisions. Sara is a fantastic teacher and enjoys building children's knowledge and skills based on their individual interests and abilities. She has been involved with Montessori education for 4 years and has amazing qualities in teaching it's methods whilst incorporating the EYFS.

Sara is part of our leadership team and facilitates quality practices into the setting whilst supporting staff with training needs.

Qualifications

Early Years teacher (EYT) level 6
Deputy designated safeguarding lead
BA (hons) childhood studies -level 6

Kimberley Thompson - Senior leader, Montessori practitioner in Children's House DDSL

Kimberley has worked at Mill Cottage for 10 years and has progressed her career to manager level. Kimberley is a lead role in facilitating early education within the setting.

Qualifications

- NVQ level 2 and 3 in Childcare.
- Level 4 leadership and management
- Fire Marshall
- Deputy Designated safeguarding lead

Sana Nabi - Infant community leader

Sana has been at Mill Cottage for 6 years and has worked her way up to a lead role in the setting. She is passionate about caring for our youngest children and has many qualities to support learning and development from age 3 months.

Qualifications

Level 3 early years
Foundation degree in learning and development

Hilary Caddy - Early Years practitioner - Toddler community

Hilary has over 20 years experience working in Early Years settings. Hilary loves engaging children in the outdoors and gets animated with her stories and singing activities with the children.

Qualifications

diploma in pre-school practice

Foundation degree in early years (level 5)

Kelsey Johnson Early Years Lead - toddler community

Kelsey is our settings equivalent to Mary Poppins - practically perfect in every way. Her calming nature is just so soothing, she is very patient and understanding of all children and their individual abilities.

Kelsey is great at planning activities and supports parents with a 2 year progress review

- Level 3 early Years

Chloe Cutting toddler practitioner

Chloe has a wealth of experience caring for the learning and development needs of children in their early years. She supports the facilitation play and education programmes with our 1-3 year age group. Chloe has a passion for Special educational needs and has amazing abilities for inspiring inclusion in the setting.

- Level 3 Early Years
- BA (Hons Childhood studies (level 6)
- MA - Research degree in SEN (level 7)

Jessica Allen - Children's House practitioner

Jess has been with us at Mill Cottage for 7 years and has a wealth of experience working with our 0-5 age group. Jess is great at enhancing creative development and is often in our art room inspiring children with real art and lots of crafts.

- Level 2 and level 4 childcare

Miriam Coop - Infant community practitioner

Miriam has been with us at Mill Cottage for 6 years, she has experience with our youngest children in the infant and toddler community. She enjoys teaching the children about festivals and sensory play.

- NNEB in Childcare (level 3)

Courtney Larcombe apprentice.

Courtney is part way through her level 3 apprenticeship in Early Years, she hopes to complete this in 2023. Courtney is demonstrating all the qualities of an amazing practitioner, her calming demeanour and passion for her role in the setting is laying the path to a bright future.

Calum Sunter - apprentice

Calum has recently joined our team and is working towards his level 2 in early years qualification. Calum used to attend Mill Cottage as a small toddler, he stayed with us for many years before going to school and has now come back to work here. We couldn't be more delighted. Calum is fluent in British Sign Language and loves to teach the children this amazing skill and to support communications.

Mill Cottage Nursery Grounds and Location

The school is housed in a grade 2 listed building set in the idyllic rural grounds within the Old Corn Mill complex, adjacent to the naturally beautiful banks of the river Calder. It is in close proximity to Castle Hill, Ponderosa rare breeds farm, Wellhome Park and neighbours Kirklees Hall Estate, the latter of which is reputed to be the final resting place of the legendary Robin Hood! The school's location in relation to surrounding towns and cities couldn't be more convenient. Brighouse, Huddersfield, Mirfield, Bradford, Halifax and even Leeds and Manchester are all within easy reach due to the extensive road and rail network links. The school has private designated parking areas for staff, parents and visitors to use at their convenience, in addition to this, there is ample shared parking within the complex grounds.



The interior of the premises underwent extensive restorations in 2005, and whilst retaining the charm and character originally afforded, now provides a safe, warm and friendly environment for the children to have the freedom to explore. Quality traditional fittings and decorations with comfortable but natural furnishings adorn the interior of the school giving it a home from home feel. The exterior of the premises underwent extensive restorations in 2019 and now comprises extensive outdoor facilities to the front, rear and side of the school premises, including nature trail, rabbits, chicken/duck coop, adventure playground, and undercover play and picnic area.

What is Montessori?

Montessori is an educational approach, developed by Italian Physician and educator Maria Montessori. This method has been implemented worldwide since 1906 and has proven to be a success; its effectiveness is demonstrated by children from all backgrounds, cultures and abilities. Montessori is a philosophy, a set of values and a way of thinking which provides an approach to life based on respect and trust. Montessori is about understanding that young children are driven to become independent and take part in daily activities that may be taken for granted. Dr. Maria Montessori firmly believed the first six years of a child's life are the most critical in terms of processing information and physical development. It is during this time that a child's powers of absorption are the highest, and attitudes and learning patterns are formed. Our Montessori teachers have studied the work of Dr. Montessori and can apply the theory behind the method in all areas of the prepared environment.

Montessori Materials

Montessori material is a general name for the teaching aids and activities within the classroom; which include a combination of specific Montessori apparatus and teacher made materials. Montessori designed her didactic apparatus by observing children, realizing that

children need the comfort of using things their own size. The Montessori apparatus is introduced to children as they become ready for the 'next step' in their learning process. All activities are presented on a 1:1 basis; this way individual progress can be assessed and recorded enabling staff to track children's progression in attaining their early learning goals as set out in the EYFS.

The Montessori Child

Children have an innate curiosity which leads them to explore the world around them. The Montessori environment enables children to investigate their surroundings through a sensorial approach, affording them the opportunity to learn at their own pace where experiences are exciting, fun and where free choice to activities is available. Children become independent thinkers and fathom problem solving by attempting things and becoming successful, this build confidence and develops positive attitudes towards life and all its challenges. Respect for oneself, each other and the environment is encouraged enabling children to use grace and courtesy skills and handle materials carefully.

Children raised in a Montessori way learn to think of the world as an exciting place full of possibilities. They begin to know themselves as powerful people who can do all sorts of things for themselves. (Montessori International, 2003)



The key components to the Montessori Method are the environment and the exercises. Montessori saw that children learn best by 'doing' and she created specially designed resources to foster independence and a love for learning from an early age. The Montessori approach is holistic and aims to develop the whole child. The environment is ordered and structured to assist the child in knowing everything has a place. The Montessori Method allows each child to develop at his/her own pace in a well-equipped and supportive environment that enables all children to progress individually, building on their strengths. Children establish an enormous surge of self-esteem in being given the opportunity to 'do it myself'.

Did you know these famous people were Montessori educated?

- Prince William and Prince Harry, Prince George
- Larry Page and Sergey Brin, - Founders of the 'Google' search engine
- Jeff Bezos - Founder of Amazon.com
- Jimmy Wales - Founder of Wikipedia
- George Clooney - Academy Award-Winning actor
- Joshua Bell - American violinist, owner of Stradivarius violinist
- Gabriel Garcia Marquez - Nobel Prize winner for Literature

Mill Cottage - Partnerships with Parents

Our aim is to offer an approach that will assist parents in their own skills enabling us to build up a trust and instill confidence in sharing a deeper understanding of your child's emerging needs, developing positive attitudes towards your child based on freedom, respect and independence, combined with clear boundaries that will help children to explore and discover the world around them. We recognise that parents are the primary carers in their child's life and so it is important to us that we work in partnership together to exchange information and discuss how we can implement things to benefit your child. Your child will be allocated a "key person" with whom such liaisons can take place. The key person will be the practitioner that will work closely with your child and monitor their growth and development. Sometime after your child turns 2 the practitioner will provide you with a written summary of your child's development in the 3 prime areas of learning. This summary will highlight areas where your child is doing well in their development, and where they may need a little more support. Parents are always welcome to join us in the setting, share ideas and enrich children's experiences in a positive way.

The Learning Environment

The Infant Community (0-18 months)

The Infant/Toddler Community is situated in an purpose built annex specifically designed to accommodate babies and young toddlers, it is spacious and comfortable for the children it accommodates. Facilities within this setting compromise a kitchenette enabling team members to warm milk as well as prepare snacks for the infants and toddlers, office, sensory area, dining and play facilities and nappy changing station. The Infant Community keeps its appeal to the infants with a sensory approach to the core of its learning and development. It incorporates a peaceful sleeping bay for resting infants, as well as a comfortable feeding area and ample room for activity and play. Naturally the comfort and safety of the community remains without compromise.

The Toddler Community (18months to 3 years)

The upper floor of our main school building is dedicated to our toddler community providing opportunities for independent learning and development. One larger room fosters the youngest toddlers providing them with a variety of learning experiences through carefully designed Montessori apparatus and various other learning aids, whilst our smaller toddler room houses the eldest toddlers giving them experiences that will assist them in developing skills, knowledge and social experiences in preparation for a pre- school environment.

A comprehensive 2 year old review takes place enabling parents to understand where their child's learning and development fits in within government guidelines.

The Children's House (2 ½ -5 years)

The Children's House is situated on the ground floor, giving children the freedom to explore both the indoor and outdoor physical environment. The Children's House compromises purpose built toilets for boys and girls, these facilities are also suitable for disabled access. The classroom lends its décor to all that is associated with a building of such fine splendor,

with many of the original features retained to create a most natural and comfortable setting. This provides children with endless opportunities for constructive learning. It is furnished and equipped to the highest standard.

1. Focuses on Key Developmental Stages

A Montessori curriculum focuses on key developmental milestones in children between the ages of three and five-years-old. Younger children focus on honing large muscle and language skills. Four-year-olds work on fine motor skills and completing everyday activities, such as cooking and arts and crafts. Older preschoolers broaden their learning experience to their communities, through trips and special events.

2. Encourages Cooperative Play

Because the teacher does not “run” the classroom, students guide the activities they do throughout the day. This encourages children to share and work cooperatively to explore the various stations in the Montessori classroom. Children in Montessori classrooms, by the very nature of the environment, learn to respect one another and build a sense of community.

3. Learning Is Child-Centered

Montessori reception students enjoy a classroom and curriculum designed around their specific needs and abilities that allows them to explore and learn at their own pace and on their own terms. Everything in the classroom is within reach of the child, and furniture is sized for children to sit comfortably. In addition, older children in the class work with the younger ones, so mentoring comes as much from peers as it does from the adult teachers in the classroom.

4. Children Naturally Learn Self-Discipline

While the Montessori Method allows children to choose the activities they want to work on each day, and how long they will work at a specific task, there are specific “ground rules” for the class that are consistently enforced by the teacher and other students. This environment naturally teaches children self-discipline, and it refines important skills like concentration, self-control and motivation.

5. Classroom Environment Teaches Order

All objects and activities have precise locations on the shelves of a Montessori classroom. When children are finished with an activity, they place items back into their appropriate places. This sense of order helps facilitate the learning process, teaches self-discipline, and caters to a young child’s innate need for an orderly environment. When children work and play in an area that is neat and predictable, they can unleash their creativity and focus fully on the learning process.

6. Teachers Facilitate the Learning Experience

Teachers in the Montessori classroom are “guides” that are there to facilitate the learning experience, rather than determine what it will look like. Teachers take the lead from the children in the classroom, ensure the ground rules are followed, and encourage students to perform tasks at their own pace. However, teachers do not determine the pace of the classroom – that is strictly up to individual students, as teachers strive to remain as unobtrusive as possible.

7. Learning Method Inspires Creativity

Since children are allowed to choose their activities and work at them on their own terms, creativity in the classroom is encouraged. Children work at tasks for the joy of the work, rather than the end result, which allows them to focus more on process than result – a natural path to creativity. Exposure to a wide variety of cultures also encourages children to broaden their thinking about the world and address those concepts in a variety of ways.

8. May be More Effective in Developing Certain Skills

Research conducted by Dr. Angeline Lillard, a professor of psychology from the University of Virginia at Charlottesville, examined the abilities of children who have been taught in a Montessori school. Published in 2006 in the journal *Science*, the research studied Montessori students in Wisconsin and found that five-year-olds in Montessori classrooms had higher maths and reading skills than their counterparts in public schools. In addition, the study compared 12-year-old Montessori and non-Montessori students. While maths and reading skills appeared to be more on par with this age group, social development appeared to be higher in Montessori students by this age.

9. System is Highly Individualised to Each Student

Students in the Montessori program are allowed to explore activities and concepts at their own pace. This naturally encourages children to try more challenging areas, which accelerates their learning experience. Learning occurs at a comfortable pace for each student, rather than inflicting the same rate on every student in a classroom.

10. Curriculum Focused on Hands-On Learning

One of the greatest benefits of the Montessori Method, particularly during the early learning experience, is the focus on hands-on learning. The emphasis is on concrete, rather than abstract learning, as students work on activities that teach language, maths, culture and practical life lessons. Teachers encourage students to concentrate on tasks, and they discourage students from interrupting one another, allowing students to focus on activities until they are properly mastered.

There are many potential benefits of a Montessori reception for children just starting out in the education process. These important early years prepare a student for the learning experience that is to come, whether they continue with the Montessori Method or move to a public classroom environment in the future.

The Outdoor Environment and Forest School

There is an extensive outdoor environment comprising: garden area with allotment and sandpit to the front of the school. A nature trail runs parallel along the side of the premise, providing a woodland area for climbing trees and balancing on logs, it also comprises tyre swings, a slide, climbing frame, mud kitchen and a purpose built chicken coop where children can collect eggs each day, handle the hens or ducks and observe life cycles in the spring. The rear of the school is home to an adventure playground with undercover play area and picnic tables, and sheds comprising an extensive range of outdoor play equipment to enhance physical skills. There are rabbits and guinea pigs for the children's enjoyment. We have a purpose built art room packed with a variety of craft resources for art and design, constructing, sticking, painting, clay modeling, sewing and many more creative activities. There is a water tray for experimenting with pouring, volume and discovering the properties of floating and sinking. Children have free access to this provision throughout the day.

Forest school activities are implemented each week with our Forest School teacher who facilitates educational programmes in the 'outdoor classroom'

Forest School is an inspirational process, that offers ALL learners regular opportunities to achieve and develop confidence and self-esteem through hands-on learning experiences in a woodland or natural environment with trees.

Forest School is a specialised learning approach that sits within and complements the wider context of outdoor and woodland education.

This learner-centred approach interweaves with the ever-changing moods and marvels, potential and challenges of the natural world through the seasons to fill every Forest School

session and programme with discovery and difference. Yet each programme does also share a common set of principles, aimed at ensuring that all learners experience the cumulative and lasting benefits that quality Forest School offers.

Principles of Forest School.

Forest School is a long-term process of regular sessions, rather than a one-off or infrequent visits; the cycle of planning, observation, adaptation and review links each session.

Forest School takes place in a woodland or natural environment to support the development of a relationship between the learner and the natural world.

Forest School uses a range of learner-centred processes to create a community for being, development and learning.

Forest School aims to promote the holistic development of all those involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners.

Forest School offers learners the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves.

Forest School is run by qualified Forest School practitioners who continuously maintain and develop their professional practice.

LITERACY - Children use descriptive vocabulary to describe woodland objects and plants, through sensory games. All of our sessions include speaking and listening, key literacy skills such as exciting vocabulary which then permeates all areas of learning. They talk and share ideas about how we can help to look after the planet.

SCIENCE – Children look at different habitats and have the opportunity to identify some in the school grounds. Children learn how animals are grouped into vertebrates and invertebrates and how vertebrates are further grouped into: birds, mammals, amphibians, reptiles and fish. We consolidate this learning by finding examples of each and learning more about the animals that live in our immediate environment.

MATHS – Children measure lengths of sticks and consolidate 3D shapes when constructing dens/shelters/making equipment. Children learn about height, length, circumference, angles, decimals and fractions whilst using addition, multiplication, division and subtraction.

ART and DT – The Forest Schools curriculum gives all children the opportunities to cut wood and shape it safely using a range of tools. They learn how to use tools including a hand drill, peeler and loppers. They will also learn how to lash pieces of wood together and how and why we tie different knots.

PSHE – We nurture a deeper bond with nature and consider how much joy it brings us, and how we in turn should respect and look after our planet. In developing the sensory gardens and music walls we will consider all children and all needs and how we can create spaces that provide experience for multiple senses. In addition, the infrastructure and design is improved so that every child has positive learning experiences.



Dining Room

The dining room provides an extension of the children's learning through cooking, baking activities and learning how to wash up and set tables. Our dining room is independent of the main physical environment, it is furnished with bespoke tables and chairs to complement the style and character of the room and has chef's private kitchen adjacent to it.

Children's Progress at Mill Cottage

The majority of the children in our setting are attaining high levels of achievement and many are reaching their early learning goals by the age of 4. According to the EYFS (2021) framework, children are expected to meet these early learning goals by the end of a reception year in school. We feel this is due to the Montessori materials which aid the children's learning, paralleled by our high ratio's of staff:child. Having these high staff:child ratios allows us to spend more individual time with each child presenting them with the Montessori materials.

Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum (EYFS)

The first five years of a child's life are specifically referred to as the 'foundation years' because these early experiences and interactions provide the infrastructure for future growth and learning. The EYFS is a very important stage; it supports your child in getting ready for school as well as preparing them for future learning and successes. Children's early years experiences should be happy, exciting, active, fun, secure, supportive and care for their individual learning needs. Your child will learn skills, acquire new knowledge and demonstrate their understanding through 7 areas of learning and development.

- **Personal Social and Emotional Development**
- **Communication and Language**
- **Physical Development**
- **Literacy**
- **Mathematics**
- **Understanding the World**
- **Expressive Arts and Design**

The Infant/Toddler Community Montessori Curriculum

Our Infant/Toddler classrooms cater for children aged 0-3 years providing a spacious environment where they have the freedom to move, explore, think, talk and learn new skills. We recognise that each child is different and will therefore progress at their own pace; this makes it necessary for staff to consider individual needs, abilities, strengths and interests. Each child is carefully observed and progress is recorded, this enables staff to ensure children are achieving their milestones. Development areas in the Infant/Toddler community follow the Montessori ethos and are closely linked to the EYFS

Motor Development

The Montessori environment plays a crucial role in motor development by providing space for children to move freely both indoors and outdoors. Children are assisted with rolling, sitting, crawling, standing, walking, running, kicking, climbing, and manipulating objects that promote the strength of the hand, develop pincer grip and generate hand/eye coordination.

Cognitive Development

Children are encouraged to establish perceptions of objects and how they operate. Staff provide many opportunities for children to interact with the environment through the use of words and images, enabling them to understand the differences between perception and belief. Children learn to become independent thinkers through sustained shared thinking exercises, involving practitioners and children 'working together' to enable children to clarify concepts, intensify their intelligence, and discover how to solve problems.

Sensorial Development

Maria Montessori developed a systematic method for training the senses of individuals, firmly believing that the training of the senses was of utmost importance in education. During the early years the development of the senses precedes all other educational experiences, laying the foundation for other areas of development.

Young babies will investigate things with their eyes, mouth and fingers, and through exploration of the physical environment will eventually discover size, colour, weight, smell, taste, and discriminate dimension and form. Music is an aural art and young children are aural learners. Since ears are fully mature before birth, infants begin learning from the sounds of their environment before birth. We therefore encourage participation in music activities to enhance children's development.

Language Development

The Montessori environment is full of oral language opportunities in the Infant/Toddler community. Our experienced practitioners will guide your child through learning sounds, saying words and the progression of speech. Staff use British sign language to assist children in expressing their needs. Children will become familiar with songs, rhymes and books as part of the promotion of language.

Social Development

From the moment of birth, your baby begins to develop his or her personality. All infants develop this way through social relationships and experiences. Infants are born with a drive that urges them to relate to others and help others relate to them. The first impulses to root and suck, grasp and smile, and gaze and cuddle in the mother's arms are precisely those needed to establish and maintain closeness. Social interaction is encouraged throughout the day where staff provide opportunities for children to become aware of others. Singing, circle time, playing outside with other children, baking activities, and snack and meal times are just some of the many opportunities where social skills are promoted.

In the social life of our Montessori classrooms, children come to prefer one another's company to dolls, and they prefer "real" utensils to toys. While working with objects such as real brushes for sweeping, children attain real skills that allow them to participate more fully in life at home as well as at nursery. Along with such practical lessons as cleaning and sweeping, the children in a Montessori class learn pro-social behaviours. The exercises of Grace and Courtesy, as the names imply, help children control their bodies and move more gracefully while giving them the courtesies of social life, the "please" and "thank you" that denote distinguished manners. Little children tend to work side by side rather than together. Montessori maintained this is essential to child development as it promotes concentration laying the basis for the development of an individual's character and subsequent social behaviour; achievement becomes easier when children master concentration.

Emotional Development

Emotions are the newborns first spontaneous expressions. They control parental behaviour and establish and maintain significant relationships between the infant and the environment. Emotional factors, such as the child's close relationship with the adults who care for him or her, help form the child's personality. We therefore aim to provide an atmosphere of affection and quality care which we believe is the most critical influence during the child's early years of development. The quality of the Infant/Toddler environment determines the quality of the children's adaptive functioning in that environment.

Children continue to grow in maturity as they carry out certain activities and acquire certain experiences. Our Montessori Infant/Toddler classrooms create conditions that allow children to manifest their natural developmental dispositions. Our prepared environment provides freedom to act within it according to their inner needs, individual rhythm and tempo, attributed to them. The activities young children are most enthusiastic about are those that further structure their personality through the processes of differentiation and integration.

Children's House Montessori Curriculum

The Children's House caters for children aged 3 - 6 years providing a spacious environment where they have the freedom to move, explore, think, talk and learn new skills. We recognise that each child is different and will therefore progress at their own pace; this makes it necessary for staff to consider individual needs, abilities, strengths and interests. Each child is carefully observed and progress is recorded, this enables staff to ensure children are achieving their milestones. By age three, children have already laid down the basic foundations of his or her personality and are now ready to experience an ever-widening circle of adults and other children. The activities available to the children in the Children's

House classroom are real and purposeful, and are performed by the children to gain new skills, knowledge and understanding of how things work. When children work in this way they increase their level of independence and come to realise that their actions benefit others. Activities are set out on open shelves in the classroom to promote structure and order and enable free choice.

Practical Life

Practical life exercises are just that, they are exercises so the child can learn how to do living activities in a purposeful way. The purpose and aim of Practical life is to help children gain control in the coordination of their movements, and help them to gain independence and adapt to their society. Practical life exercises also aid the growth and development of children's intellect and concentration and will in turn also help them develop an orderly way of thinking.

Sensorial

The purpose of sensorial exercises is for the child to acquire clear, conscious, information and to be able to then make classifications in the environment. Montessori designed the sensorial activities to cover every quality that can be perceived by the senses such as size, shape, composition, texture, loudness or softness, matching, weight and temperature.

Mathematics

The ability to count, to compute, and to use numerical relationships are among the most significant among human achievements. Montessori mathematics deals with shape, space, calculating, numbers, and the relationships and attributes by the use of numbers and symbols, it enables children to study of the science of pattern and shape. Children discover the hierarchy of the decimal system, algebra, geometry, fractions and the four operations of mathematics; addition, subtraction, division, multiplication through the extensive quantity of our maths apparatus.

Language and Literacy

Practitioners ensure that children experience different modes of language through telling stories. Most importantly, children are encouraged to feel free to communicate with others. Language and literacy opportunities in the Children's House are vast. The Montessori language materials begin with the continuation of sensorial development when children learn the phonetic alphabet, there is a natural progression to then turn letters into words and understand that words have meaning when they begin to read. Children will learn to use writing tools with the Montessori language apparatus to gain pencil control which will assist them in learning to write; children will eventually learn that writing is a form of communication.

Art

Our aim is to encourage children to utilize our extensive range of materials and resources that enhance creativity from within. Children are afforded the opportunity to appreciate fine art by studying paintings and drawings. Our art room is an extension of the art opportunities in the classroom; children are provided with resources for painting, drawing, colouring, sewing, modeling, sticking, constructing and creating.

Music and Movement

Through music, children take an inner experience and move it into a shared creative experience. Group music-making releases energy which can be channeled in creative, productive directions. Children learn about themselves and others by playing music together and by listening to each other. Music increases children's desire to listen more, learn more, and know more; speech and music have a number of shared processing systems. Musical experiences which enhance perception of language which in turn impacts on learning to read. Developmentally appropriate music activities involve the whole child-the child's desire for language, the body's urge to move, the brain's attention to patterns, the ear's lead in initiating communication, the voice's response to sounds, as well as the eye-hand coordination associated with playing musical instruments.

Cultural

The Montessori Cultural Studies curriculum provides children with an opportunity to explore the universe. We excite them on a journey that provides them with an in-depth look at the world around them using Montessori's specifically designed resources. As part of a rich exploration of the different cultures of the world, students learn about the people, terrain and animals of each continent and the solar system. Cultural Studies also introduces children to the physical world that surrounds them, providing them with the opportunity to explore real things, and learn the scientific names for plants and animals. Areas studied include geography, zoology, botany, physics, earth science, biology and social studies.

Cultural Capital

Our room leaders ensure that the curriculums we use (EYFS and Montessori) create and enhance the experiences and opportunities available to all our children, particularly the most disadvantaged, we like to ensure that children experience the awe and wonder of the world in which we live, through the seven areas of learning, this is demonstrated by adorning children with our cultural boxes, celebrating festivals and embracing the different cultures within the setting and beyond.

Food Technology

Food technology provides children with the opportunities to discover healthy eating, good food hygiene practices and the safe preparation of food. Children participate in cooking and baking activities, this can involve planting, nurturing and harvesting food grown by the children in the nursery allotment. Children will enjoy peeling, cutting, grating, weighing, stirring, chopping, whisking and melting. Whilst being involved in activities involving food. This develops independence skills, enhances concentration levels and strengthens hand-eye coordination, whilst promoting the concepts of number, time, weight and volume. Children learn the origins of fruits and vegetables and begin to understand what elements help them to grow.

Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

ICT is widely used in the nursery to enable children to connect with machinery and equipment that will prepare them for everyday modern living. The Montessori environment generally does not promote the use of computer technology; however, computers are a huge inspiration and modern phenomenon that generate much of today's workload. Children have access to a laptop and Ipad to learn how they are useful tools in gaining new knowledge, discovering how to use interactive stories. Children also become familiar with the use of digital cameras, camcorders, and other technology such as printers and photocopiers.

Examples of our Calendar monthly Fee Structure for Mill Cottage Montessori
(we are open 50 weeks per year)

Nursery 0-5 years	Day rate
Full Day Session 7.30am-6pm	63.00
Community Session 9.00am-3.30pm	51.65
Half Day (AM) 7.30am-1.00pm	38.25
Half Day (PM) 1.00pm-6.00pm	34.97

For any further session requests please contact the setting

Inclusive Freshly Cooked Home-Made Meals:

- Full Day Session - breakfast, lunch and tea
- Community Session – lunch
- Half day Session 7.30-1 - breakfast and lunch.
- Half day Session 1-6 - tea

Fresh milk, water, fruit and snacks are available for all children, all day, every day.

Healthy eating is not just about what we put on the plate. It is about educating the children and giving them the knowledge and independence to make healthy choices that will leave them in good stead for the future. Many of the children at Mill Cottage eat up to ten meals at nursery a week, making this the majority of their weekly nutritional intake. For us, this is a huge responsibility and we want to ensure that everything the children eat is of the best quality; the menus are balanced and are compiled in guidance with the School Food Trust Standards, to ensure the children enjoy their food.

We grow lots of vegetation in the grounds at Mill Cottage; apples, pears, plums, strawberries, pumpkins, potatoes, peas, cucumbers, tomatoes, carrots, are some of the items grown here. We make pies, stews, crumbles, salads, jam and fruit salads to name a few from the produce grown in our gardens.

Nursery Education Funding

All 3 to 4-year-olds in England can get 570 free hours per year. It's usually taken as 15 hours a week for 38 weeks of the year, but you can choose to take fewer hours over more weeks

Some 3 to 4-year-olds are eligible for 30 hours free childcare a week. Check if you're eligible and find out how to apply on the government website.

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-30-hours-free-childcare>

Some 2 year old's are eligible for a funded place depending on earnings and benefits claimed.

More details are available on finded hours from the setting, please clal us to find out more.

Eligibility starts from the term after your child's 2nd or 3rd birthday.

Children take up their place as follows:

birthday between 1 April and 31 August	Place starts in September (Autumn funding period)
birthday between 1 September and 31 December	Place starts in January (Spring funding period)
birthday between 1 January and 31 March	Place starts in April (Summer funding period)

Tax Free childcare

You can get up to £500 every 3 months (up to £2,000 a year) for each of your children to help with the costs of childcare. This goes up to £1,000 every 3 months if a child is disabled (up to £4,000 a year).

If you get Tax-Free Childcare, you'll set up an online childcare account for your child. For every £8 you pay into this account, the government will pay in £2 to use to pay your provider.

You can also get Tax-Free Childcare at the same time as 30 hours free childcare if you're eligible for both.

With Compliments

Thank you so much for taking the time to read this prospectus, I sincerely hope you found it informative. As you will appreciate, merely reading this will only give you an outline impression of the services and facilities that we provide here at Mill Cottage. I will be more than happy to help you with you next step towards securing a place for your child, please call the school and arrange an appointment.

Mrs Ailsa Neville – School Principal (01484 400500)
ailsa.neville@millcottageschool.co.uk