

Annual Report 2008

Barrenjoey Montessori School

The school caters for Early Stage One pupils only within an AMI Montessori program for 18 months to 6 year olds.

Philosophy by Amy Johnson, Senior Directress and Principal

The school was established to provide Montessori education, the method of education developed by Dr Maria Montessori. Her philosophy of education grew out of her observation of children. The method draws on children's innate tendencies to explore their environment using their senses, especially their hands. Through following their natural tendencies in the carefully prepared environment children are able to realize their potential as unique individuals.

The school provides a Montessori early childhood program for children from 18 months to 6 years. The children at around 5 are enrolled in Kindergarten, but continue with the Montessori curriculum they have been engaged in since at least the age of 3.

Parental involvement is instrumental in its ongoing life, from administration by participating in a Council of elected parents, working bees for the maintenance and upkeep of the building & grounds and fundraising that provides the materials for the classroom.

The children contribute to World Vision Sponsorship of a child in Africa. Each year the Early Stage 1 children correspond with Angelleh in Zambia.

History

Barrenjoey Montessori School was established in Newport in 1985 by a group of parents. After opening in a rented premise for several years, in 1990 the School moved to its present site in Avalon. The parents were able to fund a building through the generous donation of benefactor Mr. Thomas Morgan in memory of his wife Phyllis.

The building was extended to accommodate increasing enrolments in 1998.

In late 2000 the school was registered with the NSW Board of Studies as a Kindergarten, and the name was changed to Barrenjoey Montessori School (BMS).

In 2007 BMS started an under 3s program, at a separate campus in Bayview, for children between the ages of 18 months and 3 years old. This program operates Thursday and Friday mornings for up to 24 toddlers and their families.

Teacher Standards

In 2008, two teachers were involved in teaching and overseeing the ES1 program. One teacher has an AMI 3 – 6 + diploma, a BA from the University of California, Santa Barbara, USA and a Masters in Education from Loyola College in Maryland, USA. This teacher provides the major teaching input for Kindergarten and also acts as the Principal of the school. The second teacher has a BE in early childhood from Charles Strut University and oversees the curriculum and implementation of the Kindergarten program. The

second teacher also acts as the Authorized Supervisor for the school. Staff retention is 100% and has been for the last 5 years. The staff attendance for the year was 92%. There were 8 days of teacher training days, including first aid renewals.

Enrolment Policies & Current Numbers

Children usually enter Kindergarten, called the *Extended Day Program*, when they are developmentally ready, or close to their fifth birthday. Typically, a child turning five in the second half of the year would commence Kindergarten in term one the following year. The school's composition comprises 36, 3-6 year old children. In 2008, there were 13 children in Kindergarten, 9 boys and 4 girls. The average pupil attendance throughout the year was 88%.

Student Welfare Policies

The school has a number of policies and procedures in place to ensure the welfare of the pupils. Some of the policies can be found in the School Handbook, e.g. Nut Free policy implemented in 2005, whilst others are available from the school office, e.g. Child Protection, Supervision and Health. The schools discipline policy is available for viewing within the office.

Complaints handling procedures for parents and staff are detailed in the Handbook. It is reassuring to note that the informal and formal communications systems appear to work as there has been no need to enter into the formal dispute resolution procedures in at least the last 3 years. A full list of all policy documents can be found in the School Policies book, displayed at the front entrance of the school.

School Determined Improvements

Montessori philosophy and practice promotes the development of each child's potential. The school is committed to this and strives to provide a beautiful prepared environment to meet the needs of the children attending, staffed by well trained Montessori professionals. To this end, the school gives preference to Association Montessori International (AMI) trained teachers. The teachers are supported by assistants who receive on-going training in the classroom. In addition, all staff have 4 in-service workshops during each school year. Senior staff members attend professional development courses offered by the Montessori Australia Foundation and international conferences offered by AMI. This year there has been a special budget put aside for our senior staff members to attend an AMI international congress in Mumbai India in January 2009. This special event happens every 4 years in various locations around the world.

Classroom materials are replaced as they show signs of wear and tear. The classroom has a full range of Montessori materials recommended for this age group, but on-going supplementation of the materials in the practical life and language areas require both finance and staff time. There is annual on-going expenditure on library books.

The parent community continues to play a significant part in the upkeep and beautification of the school with working bees being held every term. This helps to cement the community spirit.

Fundraising events also aim to foster a sense of community spirit, as well as raise significant funds for the school. The annual fun fair, held in conjunction with the Open Day in May, is the major fund raising event for the school and has become an eagerly anticipated community event in Avalon. The funds raised contribute to recurrent expenditure and special projects, such as office and playground upgrades.

We have a parent who is an Architect who has prepared a comprehensive five year maintenance plan. We are looking at extending the school to meet a growing need from the local community to expand the 3 – 6 program with additional places. We would like to be able to incorporate a 6-9 program within the new building or by extending the existing premises. To this end, we have engaged a project manager to ease the workload of the ever-present, enthusiastic Vision Sub-Committee.

The Barrenjoey Montessori quarterly newsletters are displayed on our website:
<http://www.barrenjoeymontessori.com.au>

Financial Information for 2007

2007 Expenditure

