

INTERIM INSPECTION REPORT FOR MARIA MONTESSORI INSTITUTE

UKVI LICENCE No: QFE97RAR6

Education oversight inspection of private further education colleges on behalf of the Home Office's division of United Kingdom Visas and Immigration (UKVI)

The overall inspection findings for this college

UKVI Standards for

courses and qualifications are	MET
teaching, learning and assessment are	MET
the cultural and moral development of students are	MET
welfare, health and safety are	MET
the effectiveness and suitability of staff are	MET
financial sustainability, leadership and governance are	MET
premises and accommodation are	MET
information and complaints are	MET

Compliance with UKVI Standards

The college meets all the UKVI Standards

Introduction

Purpose and scope of the inspection

Mainland Education Ltd is an approved educational oversight body authorised by the United Kingdom Visas and Immigration (UKVI) section of the Home Office to inspect privately funded further education colleges in England, with a Steiner, Montessori or Eurythmy basis or background, or with a clear religious purpose. Inspection is designed to assess the college's compliance with the Standards for colleges agreed with the Home Office. These Standards cover the quality of education and welfare provided to all students, including those from overseas who are sponsored by the college for Tier 4 visas, and, where applicable, those who are under eighteen or are vulnerable adults. On-site

student accommodation, where provided, is assessed for compliance with the Standards but is not subject to a full boarding inspection. Inspection provides objective and reliable reports on the extent to which colleges meet the Standards. By placing reports in the public domain, the information they contain is available to students, the UKVI, and the wider community.

Inspection takes account of the context of each individual college, and of how it evaluates its own performance and demonstrates its success. It helps colleges, their staff and trustees, governors, and/or proprietors to recognise and build on their strengths and to identify and remedy their weaknesses in relation to compliance. The inspection also takes account of the college's financial performance since the last inspection and makes an assessment of its financial sustainability going forward, on the basis of information provided by the college. Prospective students, their parents and agents should make their own enquiries into the financial viability of institutions before accepting a place.

Colleges are subject to a full inspection once every four years which is conducted by two inspectors over two days. In the intervening years, colleges receive an annual interim inspection and are kept under review. Interim inspections build on the findings from the last full inspection and state whether or not the college continues to meet the agreed Standards.

The last full inspection of Maria Montessori Institute was conducted by Mainland Education Ltd in December 2023 when the college met all the required Standards for privately funded colleges. It will receive an interim check in 2026 and a full inspection in 2027.

Characteristics of the college

The Maria Montessori Institute (MMI) is an independent college providing full and part-time courses which train students to teach children in the methods developed and espoused by Maria Montessori. The college's training centre is located in central London, with an administrative head office in Hampstead. MMI also owns an independent Montessori school (for children aged 2.5 -16 years), 'The Maria Montessori School', which is located at three sites across north and west London. All sites are bilingual, with Mandarin offered at one site and Spanish at all locations. The school was last inspected by Ofsted in June 2022 when it was judged to be providing a good quality of education. The students do teaching practice in the Maria Montessori Institute's own Children's Houses and in up to seventeen other Montessori schools and nurseries which have been approved by the college for this purpose.

Students come from all over the world to attend the college and train in Montessori methodology. In the current academic year (2024-25) there are twenty six full-time students on roll, fourteen of whom are based in the UK; and twelve international students who are sponsored on Tier 4 visas. Twelve students follow the course on a part-time basis. All of the students are over the age of eighteen. The college offers a number of courses, the core one being the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) Diploma course training teachers of children 3-6 years, which may be taken as an intensive full-time one-year course; or as a two-year course, also full-time but conducted at a steadier pace; or as a part-time evening course. The Diploma course incorporates the Early Years Educator (EYE) Level 3 Diploma, accredited by Innovative Awarding Ltd., and this is the course which is approved by the UKVI for visa students. Students taking the Diploma Course over two years have the option to take a Foundation degree in Montessori Pedagogy awarded

jointly by AMI and the University of East London. Six students are currently following this course.

The college also offers AMI Diploma courses for teaching children aged 0-3 years, and 6-12 years. The former comprises mainly in-person modules taking place in London during the summer months. The latter is a combination of online and modular elements which are in-person during the Easter holidays. There are also AMI Orientation courses available for Montessori teaching assistants online. The Institute is also a centre of training for Montessori trainers.

Main Findings of Interim Inspection

The Maria Montessori Institute continues to meet all the UKVI Educational Oversight Standards. The diploma course taken by visa students incorporates the EYE qualification, which is at a suitable level and is an approved qualification for UKVI purposes. Visa students currently attending the college confirm that they were required to show their level of competency in English as required by UKVI before being accepted onto the course. Virtually all the visa students complete the course and gain the qualification. The course they take is designed to incorporate the Montessori ethos. Teaching, learning and assessment are of high quality and continue to be planned and delivered by the same team of very experienced and expert tutors. Recent research work by the Head of Training has enabled aspects of educational neuroscience to be incorporated into the child development aspect of the course. Visa students say that they have found induction to the course, seminars and discussion groups very helpful. They particularly enjoy the practical Montessori equipment sessions in the model Montessori classroom on site. Individual guidance and assessment are given through frequent and regular meetings with tutors and through online feedback on written work. Students say they value the close personal support given by tutors and the staff of their school and nursery placements.

The cultural and moral development of students is an integral part of Montessori training and the college amply fulfils this Standard. The students are all mature adults from a wide range of nationalities and they appreciate the calm, respectful nature of the Montessori ethos and its emphasis on 'the universal child'. The mix of nationalities encourages broad cultural awareness as for example when students share the potential of different festivals such as the lunar New Year when planning Montessori lessons. Students say that they develop self-confidence and self-esteem through the course by making presentations and contributing to group discussions. All the students have completed Prevent training and they have been shown how to look for signs of problems in the children they teach.

Evidence from scrutiny of documents and interviews with staff and students carried out as part of this interim inspection shows that the Standards for welfare, health and safety continue to be met. Compliant policies and procedures for health and safety, including fire safety, are in place and kept up to date. All staff are now first aid trained. A well organised electronic system of keeping admissions and attendance registers is maintained, as at the last inspection. Each student has an appointed tutor responsible for their well-being and to whom they can turn for help with academic or personal concerns. Students are very positive about the support they are given and describe the tutors as 'super helpful'. Tutors know about the pastoral needs of adult students including problems with anxiety and stress, and all have been trained in mental health first aid. In addition, students are asked to complete a 'fitness to teach' declaration on entry which helps to identify any potential problems. All the students complete safeguarding and child protection training to prepare them for working with children on teaching practice.

The Standards for suitability of staff are met. A staff of well qualified tutors continues to provide effective training in Montessori methodology. The required checks on staff, including Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and overseas police checks, are carried out and recorded on an up-to-date electronic Single Central Register (SCR). There are no temporary staff. Care is taken to ensure that timely DBS and overseas checks are also made on students prior to undertaking their teaching practice. There are no students under the age of eighteen and none who are known to be vulnerable adults.

The college continues to have a secure financial basis which gives confidence that students are not at risk of being unable to complete their course and that MMI Montessori courses and other initiatives will continue to be viable. The college is very well managed and led for the benefit of the students, with staff aware of students' needs. Staff attend an annual Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) refresher course. A three day internal review at the end of each academic year allows staff to analyse provision and plan for improvement. Trustees meet regularly and continue to work with college managers to review the provision for effectiveness.

Standards for premises and accommodation are met as at the last inspection. The college continues to be located at the same rented property in central London and is readily accessible by public transport. The premises are of high quality: modern, spacious and secure, and are used well to meet Montessori training needs. There is disabled access to both floors of the college. The premises are not used for any purpose other than Montessori training.

Students say that they find information about the college through teachers, colleagues and friends who are alumni or knew of its good reputation as providing reliable and consistent face-to-face Montessori training. The MMI website gives prospective students detailed information about the college and its work, and they say that they found the application process straightforward. The students say that they appreciate the guidance the college gives about living in London and finding accommodation. During the course the college strongly emphasises the importance of regular one-to-one in-person communication between students and tutors to report on and discuss progress. In addition, students access course materials and assessments via a dedicated on-line application (app). The students know from the student handbook that there is a complaints procedure, but no formal complaints have been received.

Overall Main Finding	Compliance	Outcome for the College
The college meets UKVI requirements.	It meets all the Standards.	It will receive an interim check in 2026.

Actions Required

- No action is required

COLLEGE AND INSPECTION DETAILS

Details of college

Name of college:	Maria Montessori Institute
Address of college:	41 Riding House Street, London W1W 7BE
Telephone number:	0207 435 3646
Email address:	info@mariamontessori.org
Proprietor:	Maria Montessori Training Organisation
Name of Principal:	Lynn Lawrence (Executive Director) Louise Livingston (Head of Training)
Licence number:	QFE97RAR6
Type of college:	Private College of Further Education

Details of student body

Age range	20 - 60
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Numbers on roll 2024-25		UK students	Visa students	Total
	Over 18:	27	13	40
	Below 18	0	0	0

Details of inspection

Type of inspection:	Educational Oversight: Interim	
Inspection Team:	Reporting Inspector:	Peter R. Jones
Date of inspection:	28 January 2025	