



**BLUE GUM**  
Montessori School

# PROSPECTUS





# Welcome to Blue Gum Montessori School



Blue Gum Montessori School was established in 1983 and is a small primary school for 3 to 12 year olds, situated in the beautiful landscape of the Bibra Lake Wetlands.

The school is governed by supportive parents, external experts and managed by a Principal. Teachers are handpicked and school support staff dedicated to providing specialised assistance and enrichment within a caring, community environment for the children, parents and staff.

The school has a holistic approach to education supporting the children in their quest to become world citizens. The classes are small with a range of ages and abilities where social skills and peer coaching are supported in a strong culture of pastoral care.

## **Our Mission**

To provide an excellent Montessori Education that enables the development of every child to reach their full potential.

## **Our Vision**

To be a leading Independent School that develops confident, independent, community-minded children, inspired to life-long love of learning.

## **Our Philosophy**

The Blue Gum Montessori School philosophy is to acknowledge the uniqueness of each child and support the natural phases of their development.

We are an independent school that values community life and that actively fosters the partnership between children, parents/carers and professional staff.

# Our Ethics

- To consider the needs of self, others, the community and the environment.
- To strive to understand and to care.
- To respect self, others, the laws of the community and the natural laws of nature.
- To appreciate and value the diversity of humans.
- To honour the work of the past and today and to look forward to the future.
- To contribute to society and the world.
- To be responsible for one's own actions, the community and the environment.



## What is Montessori Education?

### Dr Maria Montessori

Dr Maria Montessori was born in Italy in 1870 and was one of the first women to be granted a medical degree from an Italian University. She began her work in the early 1900's when she became involved initially with caring for culturally and socially deprived children, and remained dedicated to her work until her death in 1952.

Dr Montessori believed that a person cannot be educated by another person; instead the person must do it for themselves. Based on scientific research, Dr Montessori truly believed to educate individuals is to ensure learning continues long

after the years spent in the classroom, because he or she is motivated from within by a natural curiosity and love of knowledge. Dr Montessori believed that learning is stimulated by an inner need and carries for the child its own motivation and rewards. She therefore felt that the goal of early childhood education should be to cultivate this natural desire to learn. In the Montessori classroom, this objective is approached in two ways: by allowing each child to experience the excitement of learning by their own choice, and by helping them to perfect all their natural tools for learning.



## Sensitive Periods

One of the most important aspects of Dr Montessori's studies into childhood development is the recognition of 'sensitive periods'. These are periods of intense satisfaction for learning particular skills, such as grasping or releasing or removing or replacing an object. Dr Montessori believed that it is easier for the child to learn a skill during the corresponding sensitive period than at any other time in their life. The Montessori classroom therefore has a wide variety of equipment that allows the child to freely explore their particular interest as it arises.

## The Absorbent Mind

We now know from modern research that eighty percent of a child's mental development takes place before they are eight years old.

In her book, 'The Absorbent Mind', Dr Montessori wrote that 'the most important period of life is not the age of university students but the first one; the period from birth to the age of six ... for that is the time when 'man's' intelligence itself ... is formed'. The Montessori classroom, and the equipment used, are all designed to encourage and nurture the child's absorbent mind and enthusiasm for learning.



## The Montessori Method

The Montessori Method aims to develop each child's:

- Concentration
- Coordination
- Persistence
- Self-discipline
- Orderliness
- Desire to learn through discovery
- Awareness of the natural world
- Independence
- Initiative
- Creative self-expression
- Self esteem



Montessori schools provide children with a prepared environment in which they may gain experience through activities and movement. We know that movement and activity are natural functions and that learning comes through them. To this end, the Montessori environment is arranged to allow the children to move as they work.

## Materials

The highly specialised materials used by children in a Montessori school are designed to allow the child to readily see and correct their own mistakes. The general aim of all activities is to provide the child with concrete experiences to help them classify the impressions they receive from their senses - touching, tasting, smelling, seeing and hearing.

The child is encouraged to use precise terminology to explore and to classify through the use of materials graded from simple to the more complex. The objective is not the transmission of knowledge for its own sake, but rather the development of learning skills as resources upon which the child can draw in mastering their environment.

*“The aim of the materials is an inner one - mainly that the child trains him/herself to observe: that he/she is led to make comparisons between objects... to reason and decide”.*



## Role of the Teacher

The role of the teacher in a Montessori classroom is very important. The teacher does not teach in the traditional sense, but guides the child's progress, helping them to learn. The teacher is specially trained to observe and respond to the needs of the individual children and to direct the whole group. They are concerned with the total development of the child on all levels - physical, social, emotional, moral and intellectual. They will recognise a child's readiness to move on and in this way acts as a link between the environment and the child's need. The teacher is responsible for the content and the order of the environment.

## Recommended Reading

- Montessori and Your Child - Terry Malloy
- Montessori, a Modern Approach - Paula Polk Lillard
- Montessori Today - Paula Polk Lillard

An extensive range of videos and publications are available from the Montessori Australia Foundation. Please visit their website at <http://montessoriaustralia.org.au/>

Blue Gum Montessori School also provides enrolled parents with various Montessori publications via our Parent Library and Education Sessions.



# Education at Blue Gum Montessori School



## The Curriculum

As with all schools in WA, Blue Gum Montessori School is guided by the WA Curriculum Framework and covers all eight Key Learning Areas. In addition, Montessori schools follow its own international syllabus which, in many areas, is more rigorous than a traditional one. The emphasis in presentation of materials is on a complete understanding of the skills and concepts underlying any task undertaken by the individual child rather than just covering of the curriculum.

Currently, there are specialist programmes in Pre-Primary, Middle and Upper Primary in Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics (STEAM). Specialist subjects include Visual Arts, Physical Education, French, Chinese, Performing Arts and Digital Technology. All the classes have access to the Enrichment Teacher and Support Teacher to work with children across the learning continuum.

All the teachers are well trained to utilise the Montessori progressive curriculum to extend talented children. The Montessori curriculum is organised into a spiral of integrated studies,

in contrast to a traditional model in which the curriculum is compartmentalised into separate subjects, with given topics considered only once at a specific grade level. Lessons are introduced simply and concretely and are reinforced several times over successive years in increasing degrees of a child's abstraction and complexity.

Each classroom has a fiction library and in the Middle and Upper Primary, a reference library is also included. In addition, the students have access to guided research via the internet and Google Classroom.

All classes throughout the school are grouped by three age levels: 3-6 years, 6-9 years and 9-12 years. This arrangement is a corner stone of the Montessori Philosophy. The mixed ages allow a child to work with older children in one subject, younger children in another, and still have social interaction with children in his/her own age. Mixed age groups permit younger children a series of models for imitation, and older children have opportunities to motivate and to mentor and allow the development of respect and kindness across the school community.



## Infant Toddler Community

Our playgroup is open to parents and carers and their children aged 1-3 years.

The focus is on children working independently on self-chosen activities with assistance from their parent or carer.

It offers a prepared environment overseen by an experienced Montessori Coordinator.



## Our Classrooms

When you walk into a classroom, you will see happy, busy children working purposefully. The classroom teacher takes great care to create a classroom that is beautiful and enticing for the child. Each piece of equipment is carefully and thoughtfully chosen to assist the child in directing their learning.

The Montessori classroom is a child's world, geared to size, pace, needs and interests of the children within it. It is structured to allow freedom within clear limits. The materials are arranged on shelves to enable easy access by the child. The child has the choice of working at a desk or on mats on the floor and within reason with other children of his/her choice. Education also occurs both in and outdoors.



# Junior Primary: Cycle 1

In Junior Primary, the children continue the learning they have begun at home in a more structured way. Recognising that children are curious, enthusiastic and eager to learn, the classrooms are equipped to provide stimulation and challenges.

There are five defined areas, focusing on the children's interests and their developmental needs.

- Practical Life - encouraging independence through learning to care for oneself, others, their classroom and the environment.
- Sensorial - developing the sense of sight, hearing, taste, touch and smell.
- Language - building on the language skills already developed, there is a focus on the development of vocabulary, the use of language and an exploration of the phonic sounds of the English Language.
- Mathematics - development of mathematical concepts through the manipulation of concrete materials.
- Cultural - introducing the children to the world in which we live.

The classes have a flexible structure which allows the Junior Primary children to develop at their own pace. The Montessori Method encourages self-awareness and the development of independence. The children benefit from the care of specially trained teachers and the older students in the School provide valuable role models.





### 3 Year Olds

- Attend Monday to Thursday 8:30am - 3:00pm with further program options.
- Much of a 3-year-old's time is spent on Practical Life activities.
- Repetition is valued to refine and consolidate skills.
- The emphasis is on self-chosen activities initiated by individual lessons prepared by the teacher.
- Morning sessions finish with story time, music and movement exercises.

### 4 Year Olds

- Attend Monday to Thursday 8:30am - 3:00pm with further program options or Monday to Friday 8:30am - 3:00pm.
- Morning sessions are spent on self-chosen activities initiated by individual and group lessons.
- Introduced to language and mathematics programmes.
- Afternoon sessions incorporate group activities including cooking, art and craft, physical education and language.

### 5 Year Olds

- Attend Monday to Friday 8:30am - 3:00pm with further program options.







## Primary

Montessori Primary Education is a natural progression from the Junior Primary experience and changes with the needs of the children as they enter the second stage of development.

In Junior Primary, the child strives for physical independence. In Primary, the child strives for mental independence. In this period the child will typically show an innate sense of compassion, justice and idealism.

The Primary child's questioning mind, active imagination and developing ability to reason and abstract, drives the child to want to discover more. In Montessori Primary, the child's own questions provide depth in their learning.

The Montessori Primary curriculum is presented in a unique 'big picture' and holistic way, stimulating the child's imagination and demonstrating the interconnectedness of different areas of study. The basis for many areas of study includes noting the similarities and differences of the fundamental needs of man. These needs were identified by Dr Montessori as physical (food, clothing, shelter, transport and defence) and the spiritual (art, cultural, beauty and social acceptance).

Learning areas covered in the Blue Gum Montessori School Primary programme include

English, Mathematics including Geometry, Science including zoology, botany, health and physical education, Social and Environmental including history and geography. The Arts include fine art, drama and music. The second languages are French and Chinese and technology includes studio work and using computers to extend learning.

Embracing the wider world through many small group excursions is organised to complement the areas of learning. Naturally, Blue Gum is fully compliant with the requirements of the Western Australian Department of Education. The unique Montessori curriculum enhances and expands on the government required outcomes.

Children in the Blue Gum Montessori classrooms are free to follow their interests within the boundaries and requirements set by the teacher following discussions with the child. A Montessori teacher is a 'director'; skilled in observing, monitoring and assessing each child individually. The teacher ensures through direction that the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic are all covered. Through the Montessori approach in Primary education, the child is provided the opportunity to develop a high degree of independence and discipline, whilst their natural curiosity is reflected in their ability to select and complete appropriate work.

## Middle Primary: Cycle 2

In the Lilly Pilly, Wandoo, Tingle, Karri and Eucalyptus classes the children will be presented with a wide variety of materials that both consolidate and enhance the concepts they were introduced to in Junior Primary. The materials in Middle Primary, whilst still sensorial or concrete based, are designed to help the child proceed along the pathway to abstraction. Many Junior Primary materials are used again but

now become known by subject name such as geometry, geography, grammar and algebra.

Middle Primary children are driven by the need to belong to the 'group'. Social skills gained in Junior are now the internal drive of the child as they strive to belong to a group, both large and small. Dr Montessori described this age as 'the age of rudeness and serenity'!

## Upper Primary: Cycle 3

In Coolibah, Kurrajong and Banksia classes the areas of study continue on from Middle with an increasing emphasis on preparation for secondary education. Children in Upper Primary build on and extend their knowledge based on the concepts they have learnt in Middle Primary. The children move increasingly towards the abstract; however concrete materials are still used to aid understanding at a deeper level. This is the act of teaching in action!

The children in Upper Primary are expected to account for their time by keeping a detailed diary, recording start and finish times of work; tasks to be completed each week and daily lessons with small groups or individuals. The children also have quiet reading time directly after playtime

and the weekly programme includes, but is not limited to, the learning of spelling lists and a spelling quiz.

Upper Primary children also seek and enjoy more social responsibility and Blue Gum Montessori School provides them with opportunities to further develop leadership skills and initiative. There are four main activities: peer support, a school camp, tree planting in the wetlands and the End of Year Assembly. The School year culminates in the Graduation Ceremony for those children moving on to secondary school.

The school is researching the possibility in offering an Adolescent program.





# Our Specialist Subjects

## Visual Arts

In Visual Arts at Blue Gum Montessori School, we teach students about Visual Language and developing the ways they do so through Visual Skills, Techniques and Processes, and using Materials and Technologies.

## Chinese

At Blue Gum Montessori School, students have the opportunity to develop their Chinese Language skills through the focus areas of greetings, numbers, introduction of themselves and their family members, likes and dislikes, sport activities, colours and foods.

Students at Blue Gum Montessori School familiarise cultural practices through the celebration of Chinese festivals by learning what people wear and eat during the festival season.

## French

Blue Gum Montessori School alternatively offers a French program to all students, with our students learning French once a week beginning in Pre-Primary. Students also have the opportunity to consolidate their learning by attending after-school French clubs. All classes are taught by native teachers to optimize children's learning and to bring more authenticity in the language classroom.

## Practical Life

Practical life in the Montessori curriculum refers to purposeful activity which develops motor control and coordination, independence, concentration and a sense of responsibility. The exercises in Practical Life cover two main areas of development: care of self, and care of the environment. Practical life skills are of great interest to young children and form the basis of later abstract learning.

## Performing Arts

At Blue Gum Montessori School, students from Junior, Middle and Upper Primary attend Performing Arts classes once per week, where they engage in active music making with a focus on singing, movement, dance, percussion playing and instrumental work. Classroom work is based on Montessori principles aimed at teaching music literacy and developing skills in performance and composition.

## Positive Education

In Positive Education sessions, students learn to meditate, read and discuss books with messages around topics such as resilience and facing fears, role-play how to join in games and carry on conversations (in Junior Primary we call this 'throwing the ball back and forth'). In Middle and Upper Primary students also engage in philosophical conversations and cognitive behaviour problem-solving discussions around friendship issues in order to focus on changing unhelpful thinking and encouraging each other to 'do the right thing'. Child safety is a priority!

## Physical Education

Regular physical activity is an essential component of Montessori early childhood settings. Young children move constantly and need movement in order to learn. Montessori settings are prepared to allow children freedom of movement while, at the same time, activities are designed to enable children to develop control of their physical movement. Daily free play outdoors extends opportunities for regular physical activity.

## Bush School

Blue Gum Montessori children are in a unique position to be able to reconnect with nature as the stunning Beeliiar Wetlands are right on our doorstep. All adults know that children these days are spending far less time outdoors and too much time on screens. At Blue Gum Montessori, we don't want our children to experience "nature deprivation."

## Digital Technologies

Junior Primary – At this age students are starting to discover the digital systems in their environment. They are also able to recognize and collect patterns and symbols using different data. They are aware of people sharing things online and strategies are modelled towards being safe online. They can also form their own opinion when creating and solving small solutions.

Middle Primary – Digital systems are now used with a purpose and they can also embody data representations. Students use these tools to express their creativity solving problems. They also start to make informed decisions based on the task. It is also common that during this process students engage in investigating, designing and evaluating when given a problem based task.

Upper Primary – At this age students learn about networks and how they function in different ways. They also learn new codes to program and develop a better understanding towards specific purposes. Within the process of creating, students justify and evaluate their tasks based on the process and the solution.

## STEAM

Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics.

The school has a studio named Doorndak. In the studio, the children focus on STEAM learning. The Noongar name for the Bush, Technology and Arts program is Kadadjiny. It means thinking, listening and learning. This is what makes Blue Gum Montessori School so innovative!





# Enrolment at Blue Gum

## Infant Toddler Community

Blue Gum Montessori School Playgroup is open to children aged one to three years, when they are independently mobile. Sessions are held locally offsite during our school term time on Mondays and Fridays. Please contact administration on (08) 9417 4060 for further information.

## Junior Primary (3-6 Years)

- Children are encouraged to commence as soon as possible after their third birthday.
- Our waiting list is strong and it is recommended that you complete and Application for Admission before your child is two years old.
- Completion by parent/s of a classroom observation is required before an Application for Admission will be processed. It is also strongly recommended that parents also attend or view an Information Session.
- Enrolment interviews are generally conducted in the term prior to the child's intended start date.

## Middle and Upper Primary (6-12 Years)

- Applications for Admission are welcomed and will be processed by the school Registrar.

# eLearning Campus

In the event the school is closed due to COVID-19 or other pandemics, Blue Gum Montessori School has a prepared Montessori eLearning Campus.

Our aim is to create a Montessori-based framework that serves our students while supporting parents as we all adapt to a different daily routine. It is important to us that the children's activity during this time be enjoyable, thoughtful, challenging and rewarding. Our aim is for your child's learning to continue as naturally as possible.

Replicating what happens in our classrooms is not something we can easily achieve during this period. However, our goal is to work in collaboration with families to keep alive the culture of learning that is unique to Blue Gum Montessori School and provide families with support and learning activities that match the developmental needs and characteristics of their child.

Upon enrolment, all families will gain access to the eLearning Handbook and all relevant resources.

# Enrolment Process

## Open Morning or Evening Information Session

- Attend a prospective parent event to appreciate the philosophy behind a Montessori education.
- Open Mornings and Evenings are very popular and bookings are essential.
- Bookings can be made via our website.

## Class Observation

- Join one of our classrooms and gain an insight into how the children spend their learning time within the prepared environment at Blue Gum Montessori School.
- Observations are held from 9.30-9:50am on Monday to Thursday by appointment only.
- Completion of a classroom observation is a pre-requisite to attending Blue Gum Montessori School.
- Contact the school on (08) 9417 4060 to book an observation.

## Request an Application Pack

- Application forms are available from the school or via our website.

## Enrolment Family Meeting

- After an Application for Admission form has been completed, and parents have attended a classroom observation, they will be notified of a date and time for an interview.
- Our belief is that it is vital for parents and the school to form a partnership based on common values and beliefs that will be reflected in the education of their child. This is the focus of the enrolment interview.

## Enrolment into Junior, Middle and Upper Primary Classes

- Students are only admitted should a vacancy arise in that age group.





*"The child is both a hope and  
a promise for mankind."  
Dr Maria Montessori*



**BLUE GUM**  
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