

Dr Marina Montessori

Dr. Maria Montessori (1870-1952) was an Italian physician and pedagogue who did extensive research on how to teach children who were disadvantaged. She made observations about how children learnt, what activities interested them and discovered ways to help them achieve their potential.



Maria Montessori left a legacy of a method of education which combines a practical approach based on carefully planned learning environment with a philosophy centred on the freedom for the child. She believed that all children are intrinsically motivated to learn and they absorb knowledge without effort when provided with appropriate activities at the appropriate stage of development.

Maria Montessori was one theorist that originated the model of holistic education. She believed that when children initiate their own practical play and use their own abilities they develop all aspects at their own pace.

Montessori's three fundamental principles are also key elements of the Forest school programme. Forest School principle 1 (*Planning, adaptation, observations and reviewing are integral elements of Forest School*) supports Montessori's principle one that the needs of the child must be identified through observations. Forest School principle 6 (*Play and choice are an integral part of the Forest School learning process...It is a learner-centred pedagogical approach is employed by Forest School that is responsive to the needs and interests of learners*) supports Montessori's principles two and three; that the environment must be carefully prepared taking into account the child's interests and stage of development; and the adults must acknowledge the needs of the child to create links between the child and the environment.

At The Willows Forest School we plan activities that take account of the children's interests, their stage of development and we expose learners to different aspects of development, so children are 'intrinsically motivated to learn and they absorb knowledge without effort'.