

# **ELONERA MONTESSORI SCHOOL**

## **PROSPECTUS**

**2008**

### **SCHOOLS MISSION**

***"Working together to help our children to help themselves."***



**21 Mount Ousley Road, Mount Ousley NSW 2519**

Phone: 02 42251000, Fax: 02 42289525, [eloneramontessori@bigpond.com](mailto:eloneramontessori@bigpond.com)

[www.eloneramontessori.com.au](http://www.eloneramontessori.com.au)



# ELONERA MONTESSORI SCHOOL



Preschool  
Primary  
Secondary



- ☺ **Application Form**
- ☺ **Fees 2008**
- ☺ **Comparison**
- ☺ **What Makes Us Special**
- ☺ **Elonera Montessori Prospectus**



21 Mount Ousley Road  
Mount Ousley NSW 2519  
Ph: 02 42251000, Fax: 02 42289525  
[eloneramontessori@bigpond.com](mailto:eloneramontessori@bigpond.com)

[www.eloneramontessori.com.au](http://www.eloneramontessori.com.au)

## **INTRODUCTION**

**Elonera Montessori School is a state registered independent school providing a stimulating and positive learning environment for students from 3 - 16 years of age. Small classes ensure personalised guidance and attention. The students belong to a small harmonious community and there is recognition of each child's individual needs and learning styles.**

**Education at the Elonera Montessori School offers your child an opportunity to develop independence, self-confidence and self esteem. The program encourages the development of personal responsibility, thinking processes and encourages a love of learning.**

**We hope this booklet will convey to you some of Elonera's special characteristics. If you would like to know more we extend a cordial and enthusiastic invitation to you to contact the school on (02) 4225 1000 and arrange either a tour of the school or an observation of one of our classes in action. You will be most welcome.**

## **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT**

**In 1987 Elonera Montessori School commenced a primary program with one Montessori trained State Primary teacher and eight children, following the vision of a group of dedicated parents who shared a dream of providing a Montessori Primary School education for their children.**

**From this modest beginning, Elonera has grown to be a school catering for the Children's House (pre primary- ages 3yrs to 6yrs); Primary (ages 6yrs to 12yrs); with teaching staff who use the Montessori method of education.**

**Elonera Montessori has a Certificate of Registration for Years K to 6 and a Certificate of Registration and Accreditation for Years 7 to 10 from the Board of Studies, NSW. The School's curriculum is compatible with other schools in NSW however the methodology of teaching is different.**

**Parents can therefore be certain that children remaining at the school through their formative years will attain much the same levels of achievement as in other schools with the addition of the Montessori advantages.**

**The school is conscious of the need to maintain continuity of education from primary to secondary school and as such liaises with the high school as well a number of secondary schools. The curriculum is broad based and integrated and includes the six key learning areas for primary plus a language (Italian) and the eight key learning areas for high school.**

## **THE MONTESSORI PHILOSOPHY**

**Montessori School follows the educational philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori (1870 - 1952) and provides a non -sectarian education at all school levels.**

**Montessori Education is a learning process where children are encouraged to develop within boundaries at their own pace in a safe and caring environment. Established world - wide, the Montessori Method has proved successful with children from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds.**

**There are thousands of Montessori schools in Europe, North America, Asia and many in Australia.**

**Montessori is based on the child's innate need to develop intellectual and physical abilities and provides a carefully prepared environment designed to meet and direct this need. Education Montessori School therefore aims to assist in the total development of the child - social, emotional, intellectual, physical and cultural - so that the child will be better prepared for life and can adjust to the changing conditions of his/her environment.**

**The Montessori approach to education is child centered and is based on mutual respect and cooperation. The teacher in a Montessori classroom is more of a guide and facilitator respecting the concentration and varied learning approaches of the children. Non-aggression and non-interruption, tolerance and concern for others are stressed. Montessori is about learning to balance responsibility with freedom of choice. It offers children the opportunity to realise their potential in a non-competitive environment and seeks to promote in them:**

- Respect for work**
- Self confidence and self esteem**
- A sense of achievement and self worth**
- A sense of responsibility for themselves and their actions**
- Independence and adaptability**
- Cooperation with others and a sense of community**
- Respecting the rights and needs of others**
- Concentration and persistence in completing a task**
- Initiative and self motivation**

## **WHAT MAKES MONTESSORI DIFFERENT FROM OTHER EDUCATION?**

The child learns and is motivated through the work itself (not solely the teacher) to persist in a given task. Each child has its own individual program suited to its particular personality and needs. Each child receives individual attention, wherever possible and certainly wherever needed, all instruction is one on one or in small groups of similar ability. One of the most important advantages is that each child can and does work at its own pace. Children are expected to work, and there is no competitiveness, only the child's own drive and desire to learn. The child is neither pressured to keep up with others, nor bored by having to wait for others to catch up, consequently the child is happy to learn and come to school.

## **SCHOOL STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATION**

### **SCHOOL COUNCIL**

Elonera is governed by a Council of Directors that are teachers, parents as well as a corporate or non-corporate member who have a common mission of providing the Montessori Method of education, as articulated in the Elonera Montessori Blueprint of Fundamental Values and Beliefs.

The management of the school has been delegated to the Head of School who administers the school as a Pre-primary, Primary and Secondary school, in consultation with various committees. Elonera Montessori School is a non-profit company, of limited guarantee that is owned by the members. The School Council and the teaching staff develop school policy, based upon the Board of Studies NSW requirements, as well as ensuring that it is aligned to the school's blueprint of Montessori education.

### **STAFFING**

One of the schools strengths is their caring, committed and the professional staff who are very involved in fostering the growth and individual capabilities of each child.

The school employs a staff of qualified teachers registered with the Institute of Teachers NSW. In addition, our pre and primary teachers are trained and fully qualified in the Montessori methodology. The high school teachers are qualified in their specialty area, and some are undergoing Montessori Training.

The administration staff of the school comprises the Head of School, Office manager and part-time cleaning, maintenance and grounds staff. School support staff assists in all of the classes. Specialist teachers in the primary are contracted for literacy/ESL, and Italian. Staffing is stable which ensures a team spirit within the school and a sense of security within the child.

## **CLASSROOM PROGRAMS**

Years of patient observation led Maria Montessori to realise that children pass through very definite planes of development. The first plane of development is from the age of 0-6, the second plane of development is from the age of 7 and the third plane of development is from adolescence (ages 10 – 18). Therefore in the Montessori learning environment children pass through cycles rather than in grades.

The Montessori classroom is a vibrant community of approximately up to 20 children, where the child learns to interact socially in a variety of ways. The age and sex mix comprising a three year age range of both boys and girls and approximates a family grouping.

The older children will be models for the younger ones thereby further increasing their confidence and knowledge. They also acquire a sense of responsibility through being leaders in the class, which further enhances their self image. Meanwhile the younger children are inspired to more advanced work through observing the older ones. The variety of levels in the classroom allows each child to work at his/her own pace. The program facilitates the development of a caring community within which cooperative rather than competitive learning can flourish.

In the Montessori classroom at any level the child is confronted with an orderly environment with a variety of especially designed simple hands on equipment that are fun to manipulate and are self correcting in nature. This helps children to understand from an early age many difficult concepts that are usually stumbling blocks such as fractions, units or verbs.

## **CHILDREN'S HOUSE (PRE-PRIMARY)**

The Montessori Children's House is designed for children from 3 to 6 years old. Children attend a daily session for five days a week. This provides a regular and established routine at an optimal time of the day for learning.

As in a family, the children learn from and assist one another. They are free to move about, talk and work with familiar materials that can be divided into the five basic areas of the pre-school curriculum.

1. Practical life materials provide the link between home and school and enhance the development of coordination, confidence, concentration and independence. They help the children adapt to their environment. The Practical Life activities include polishing, washing, pouring, dressing skills, food preparation, sewing and social skills.
2. Sensorial materials are designed to help children become more perceptive to understand concepts and focus on the details of the world around them, and are in direct preparation for later work. Activities involve grading and matching shape, weight, touch, taste colour and sound.

3. Language materials increase vocabulary, explore the sounds and syntax of the English language and help children to read and write. Activities commence with oral language work such as stories, speaking and sound games, through to working with sandpaper letters, writing with a movable alphabet and then reading.
4. Mathematical concepts are offered to children concretely. Hands-on materials create an enjoyable approach to arithmetic and geometry. Children will learn to count and then to operate decimal systems and fractions all concretely. From this solid base abstraction occurs naturally.
5. Cultural materials provide children with experiences in geography, history, music art and natural sciences. As in other areas the child first experiences culture on a concrete level. Activities include puzzle maps for geography, bells for music, personal time-lines for history, simple science experiences such as sink and float and a range of paints and materials for art.

Children generally move into an extended day program sessions at approximately 5 years of age (this is a small group of older children working with the teacher on more formal schoolwork). It is usually during this final year in the program that the greatest progress in the development of the child's social and academic skills can be observed. The first two years have laid a foundation of knowledge and experience which is consolidated and built upon in the third year leading to greater confidence and competence. Work in smaller groups also provides the opportunity to develop greater concentration and engage in increasingly more difficult tasks.

Children in The Children's House gradually develop a new level of social and emotional maturity, which usually indicates a readiness to enter Primary. To help in this transition, children are encouraged to spend more time in what will become their new classroom where materials and methods overlap from the Children's House. In this way a gently and gradual transition into Primary is achieved, as there is a continuity and logical progression through each stage.

The children continue to learn from and assist one another in their classroom community, which is surrounded by an environment suited to their developmental needs. All subjects from the Children's House are greatly expanded in the primary. Their minds focus not on facts and names but on relationships. The reasons 'why' and the 'how' fascinate them. The materials found in the primary classrooms enable the children to explore past, present and future. The children see an overview of particular concepts and areas of knowledge and then focus on the specifics.

Research is an important aspect of the Primary classrooms and the children explore alone, in cooperative groups and as a class such subjects as astronomy, geology, physics, evolution, biology and history. As they study the children begin to perceive the links between these fields

and often find that new areas of study open for them. For example, the history of Egypt is tied to the Nile, geography, to art and to writing, hieroglyphics, to geometry, the 3-4-5 triangle to survey following the floods to fauna, the crocodiles and so on, to flora, the papyrus, the writing paper to record the history which was the point we entered the chain.

Mathematics and language (reading, spelling etc.) also form a pivotal part of the child's experiences and learning.

Concrete Montessori materials facilitate understanding, while a full curriculum embracing all of the elements of a traditional curriculum, but approaching them from a Montessori perspective, is experienced. The primary Montessori classroom utilizes a modified contract system wherein certain areas and amounts of work are covered with set of time. The child is responsible for ensuring that their work is covered. Each child is therefore able to develop his/her own work patterns.

For example one child may spend very lengthy periods of time on one subject then another, whilst a classmate may work for a shorter period on a wider variety of work. Yet each child will maintain a similar spread of work overall.

In a Montessori classroom the teacher is constantly on the move, overseeing, advising and assisting as necessary. The teacher may give a lesson to a small group here, to an individual there and always with reference to the individual needs of the children in the class. Throughout these Primary years social awareness grows.

## **SECONDARY**

The Montessori Secondary class is designed for students from 12 to 16. The students continue to learn from and assist one another in their classroom community, which is surrounded by an environment suited to their adolescent needs. The classes continue to operate with the three-hour work cycle in the morning, which is similar to the primary school. A timetable operates to cover the 8 key learning areas, and is staffed by part-time and fulltime staff members.

Independent research is an important aspect of the Secondary classrooms and the students explore alone, in cooperative groups and as a class such subjects as science, philosophy, literature, history, cultural studies, mathematics, humanities, and earth studies. As they study the students begin to perceive the relationships between these fields and often find that new areas of study open for them. The Montessori classroom utilizes a modified contract system wherein certain areas and amounts of work are covered with set of time. The student is responsible for ensuring that their work is covered. Each student is therefore able to develop his/her own work patterns. In a Montessori classroom the teacher is constantly on the move, overseeing, advising and assisting as necessary.

The teacher may give a lesson to a small group here, to an individual there and always with reference to the individual needs of the student in the class. Throughout these adolescent years, tolerance, co-operativeness and social awareness grows.

### **How do the children adapt to other High Schools?**

Experience shows that the children cope very well in other schools both academically and socially. Yet another aim of the Montessori class is the achievement of a thoroughly adaptable child.

In upper Primary the children undergo more work within time limits, sit formal exams and increase the amount of homework in preparation for High School.

We often receive comments about how self motivated and independent Montessori trained children are.

## **SPECIAL PROGRAMS**

### **MUSIC, LANGUAGE AND DRAMA**

Music in all its forms plays a great part in all classes. Percussion instruments, a piano, keyboard, and drum kit are available in the Cycle Four/Five classroom. Drama is explored and presented at a yearly concert.

Elonera also offers one-hour tuition to Primary and two and a half hours for the Secondary in a language other than English. In the Children's House the children are participating in German lessons.

### **LITERACY**

There is a support program for children with specialist literacy and ESL needs with fully qualified English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher. We also have a support staff member

### **OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES**

An important part of children's development is their activity in the outdoor environment. Concepts explored with classroom materials are applied to the wider outdoor environment. Nature and its fascination for the young child are brought into the classroom from outside. A range of exciting outdoor play equipment fosters physical activity. In Primary, outdoor activity takes a further step and includes development of specific physical skills such as catching techniques, swimming, dance, fitness and a variety of games.

## **SPORT PROGRAM**

The Primary and Secondary classes participate in sport one or two afternoons a week. We have in the past utilized the facilities at the University, Beaton Part Leisure Centre, the PCYC, Northern Bowl, the Wollongong Tennis Club and Hawks Basketball stadium. Sports at times have included swimming, athletics, gymnastics, basketball and tennis. (There is a separate charge for off site or contractual sports, due to the transport and entry fees charged).

## **EXCURSIONS**

For all classes, taking children on excursions broadens the program. These may include trips to the botanical gardens, to museums, the library, galleries, recitals, theatre, national parks, historical exhibits and the like.

Also visitors with special skills and interests to share, who are expert in a particular field, may be invited into the classroom (e.g. a musician, person from another country, craftsperson, visiting entertainer, (puppeteer, etc) as class or individual interests warrant. (NB there is a separate charge for excursions and these must be paid in advance).

## **TERMS**

Elonera Montessori follows normal school terms.

## **HOURS**

9am to 3pm for all stages. There are breaks for morning tea and lunch.

## **OUTSIDE SCHOOL HOURS CARE (OOSH)**

To assist parents, the school provides an out of school hours care service. This service operates from 8.00am to 8:45 am and from 3.15pm to 5.30pm available for a small charge.

## **CANTEEN**

Is offered on Fridays only, with orders due on Tuesday afternoon.

## **PARENT INTERVIEWS**

There are comprehensive mid year and end of year reports. Interviews at other times are available by arrangement with the teacher.

## **SCHOOL BANKING**

Offered once a week for students and done by a parent volunteer, (this is a fundraiser for the school).

## **SCHOOL CAMP**

Upper primary and the Secondary attend an annual school camp. They organise and participate in their own fundraising towards the cost of the camp.

## **UNIFORMS**

There is no school uniform but students are expected to be sensibly and neatly attired. Children are requested to wear a hat when they are outside.

## **ENTRY TO THE SCHOOL**

Children tend to settle more readily and adapt better to the situation and environment of the Montessori classroom if they enter close to their third birthday, depending on the individual readiness of the child. However, if a vacancy in an older age group does occur, subject to consultation with the class teacher, such children may be accepted into the school.

The hours of attendance of a young child new to the class may be varied in the first days (or weeks) in class to facilitate a smooth transition to the Montessori environment. The teacher in consultation makes decisions on the timing of entry of children into the class with the parents and on the basis of an assessment of the needs of each individual child.

The first four weeks of enrolment are a mutual trial period for both the school and the family.

## **APPLICATION FOR ENROLMENT**

As a general rule entry to the school is from the School waiting list. Children may be registered on the waiting list at any time but it is recommended this be done after the child's first birthday.

## **ENROLMENT CRITERIA**

The school takes the following criteria into account in the enrolment process:

- Date of application**
- Age of child**
- Child's social and emotional maturity**
- Readiness to commence school**
- Sibling of a child already at school**
- Prior Montessori schooling**

## **ENROLMENT PROCEDURE**

**TOURS** - tours before enrolling are most beneficial and can be arranged by phoning the school office.

In preparation for periodic intakes or when an occasional vacancy occurs, applicant parents and their child are invited to attend an interview. At this meeting the teacher will familiarize the child with the environment and in discussion with the parents gauge the child's readiness for school. Such information as the child's health, interests, family background and prior experiences are discussed. A decision on placement will be communicated shortly after this interview and a formal offer will be made.

Children usually have a trial day before they are enrolled. If students are at another school, they are asked to bring along the latest school report.

## **ACCEPTING A PLACE - MAKING THE DECISION**

Elonera will have provided a range of information directed towards ensuring families are able to make an informed decision when accepting an offer of a place at Elonera Montessori School. This will have included the Parent Information package, a tour of the school, the enrolment interview and consultations as may be necessary.

## **ACCEPTANCE AND SECURING A PLACE**

A place in the school will be secured and formalized when the following forms are completed and returned to the school.

Acceptance of enrolment form together with a 'Conditions of Entry ' form with a refundable bond and one term's school fees and a tax deductible Building Fund donation.

The actual commencement date will be advised at the relevant time.

## **PARENT INFORMATION**

Parents will then receive further written information as necessary. Such information will cover special events or matters of interest. Parent information evenings are regularly held and a member of staff and parents/council members give presentations. Parents on the waiting list are also invited.

## **NEWSLETTER**

The school has a weekly newsletter "Elmonti" which includes reminders of school activities, fundraising events and other important information for the coming week.

## **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

**In a growing parent inclusive school such as ours, parent involvement in support of the school's goals is essential. The success and development of the school has been to large extent due to the willingness of parents to give time and energy to work and contribute in a variety of ways. The continuation of this success will depend heavily on our future parents and it is for this reason that parents are actively encouraged to become involved. Whilst personal and business commitments may make it difficult to participate in many activities, all parents can contribute in some way.**

**Involvement can mean:**

**Helping with school canteen**

**Nominating for school council**

**Becoming a member of one of the various school task groups**

**Assisting teachers (e.g. donating time, services, goods etc) with the making and/or maintenance of classroom materials**

**Giving administrative, or organizational assistance as required such as student banking and running the school library**

**Supporting and assisting in the various fundraising activities (an important revenue raiser and each family is required to participate in all fundraising activities, our main fundraiser is our annual Trivia night)**

**Assisting in working bees (There are 4 working bees per year and a roster is drawn up to allow everyone to participate equally. It is compulsory for each family to attend one per year.)**

**The families of the school provide the energy and direction that will ensure our children can receive the high quality Montessori education we wish for them. Parent commitment means that you acknowledge the need for all families to help the school run smoothly and are available when help is needed. Along the way, you will learn more about your child's exciting life at school and the wonderful influences of a Montessori curriculum.**