

Charity Number 1136552

Montessori Education for Autism

Report of the Trustees
and
Independently Examined Financial Statements
for the year ended 31 December 2020

Montessori Education for Autism

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Montessori Education for Autism

Trustees of the Charity

Wendy Fidler	**	<i>Chair, Academic Director</i>
Roger Patenall	**	<i>Treasurer</i>
Shalini Modi	**	
Ashok Kumar		
Rachel Spooner		
David Stott		
Delphine Marcillaud		
Katalin Lovassy		<i>appointed 1st July, 2020</i>
Michelle Collings		<i>resigned 6th July, 2020</i>

** *Members of the Executive Committee*

Reference and administrative details of the charity

Charity Registered Number 1136552

Registered Office

Montessori House, 135 Westcombe Hill, Blackheath, London, SE3 7DP

Bankers

CAF Bank Ltd

Insurance Brokers

Northern Counties Insurance LLP

Montessori Education for Autism

Statement of Financial Activities

for the year ended 31 December 2020

		Restricted Funds 2020 £	Unrestricted Funds 2020 £	Total Funds 2020 £	<i>Total funds 2019 £</i>
	Note				
Incoming resources					
Voluntary income	1	14,000	66,077	80,077	87,548
Activities	2		35,748	35,748	29,046
Investment Income	3		22	22	14
Total Incoming Resources		<u>14,000</u>	<u>101,847</u>	<u>115,847</u>	<u>116,608</u>
Resources Expended					
Charitable activities	4	5,450	98,510	103,960	115,214
Governance costs	5		400	400	400
Total resources expended		<u>5,450</u>	<u>98,910</u>	<u>104,360</u>	<u>115,614</u>
Movement in total funds for the year		8,550	2,937	11,487	
Total funds at 1 January 2020		0	18,645	18,645	
Total funds at 31 December 2020		<u><u>8,550</u></u>	<u><u>21,582</u></u>	<u><u>30,132</u></u>	

Montessori Education for Autism

Balance Sheetas at 31 December 2020

	Note	2020		2019	
		£	£	£	£
Current Assets					
Petty Cash Floats		254		75	
Debtors	7	3,833		4,659	
Total at Bank		26,045		15,471	
		<u>30,132</u>		<u>20,205</u>	
Creditors					
Due within one year	8	-		1,560	
		<u>30,132</u>		<u>18,645</u>	
		<u>30,132</u>		<u>18,645</u>	
Charity Funds					
Unrestricted Funds	9	21,582		18,645	
Restricted Funds	9	8,550		-	
		<u>30,132</u>		<u>18,645</u>	

The notes and policies on pages 4 to 6 form part of these Financial Statements

The Financial Statements were approved by the Trustees on 8th January, 2021
and signed on their behalf by:



Roger Patenall FCA

Montessori Education for Autism

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 31 December 2020

	Restricted Funds 2020 £	Unrestricted Funds 2020 £	Total Funds 2020 £	<i>Total Funds 2019 £</i>
1 Voluntary Income				
Donations	14,000	51,232	65,232	70,361
Gift Aid		14,845	14,845	17,187
	<u>14,000</u>	<u>66,077</u>	<u>80,077</u>	<u>87,548</u>
2 Income from Activities				
Registrations	-	400	400	510
Donations to Nurture Groups	-	29,385	29,385	16,633
Donations for SEN & Walden Training	-	5,730	5,730	8,702
MEfA Conferences & Events	-	-	-	2,139
Other fundraising	-	233	233	1,062
	<u>-</u>	<u>35,748</u>	<u>35,748</u>	<u>29,046</u>
3 Investment Income				
Bank Interest		22	22	14
4 Expenditure on Charitable Activity				
Summary by Fund Type:				
General Overheads		1,859	1,859	2,941
Administration costs		9,678	9,678	10,462
Nurture Groups		85,021	85,021	90,652
SEN & Waldon Training		7,802	7,802	10,059
MEfA Conferences & Events		-	-	1,500
	<u>-</u>	<u>104,360</u>	<u>104,360</u>	<u>115,614</u>
Summary by expenditure type:				
Overheads and Admin			11,537	13,403
Nurture Groups			85,021	90,652
SEN & Walden Training			7,802	10,059
MEfA Conference & Events			-	1,500
			<u>104,360</u>	<u>115,614</u>

Montessori Education for Autism

Notes to the Financial Statements, continued

	2020	2019			
	£	£			
5	Employee				
	In 2020 there was one employee (2019 - one) involved in the provision of charitable activity				
	There were no employees whose annual remuneration was £60,000 or more.				
6	Governance Costs				
	Accountancy Costs	400	400		
	Legal Fees re lease extension	-			
	Meeting Expenses	-	-		
	Bank charges	-	-		
	Postage	-	-		
		400	400		
7	Net Income				
	This is stated after charging Accountancy Fees	400	400		
	During the year, no Trustee received any remuneration for acting as a Trustee (2019 - nil)				
	During the year, no Trustee received any benefits in kind (2019 - nil)				
	During the year, no Trustee received any reimbursement of expenses (2019 - nil)				
8	Debtors				
	Trade debtors, due within one year	2,750	2,750		
	Donation Pledged	-	1,909		
	Sundry Debtors	1,083	-		
9	Creditors				
	Expense accrued, due within one year		1,560		
##	Statement of funds	Brought Forward	Incoming Resources	Resources Expended	Carried Forward
		£	£	£	£
	Unrestricted funds	18,645	101,847	98,910	21,582
	Restricted funds	0	14,000	5,450	8,550
		18,645	115,847	104,360	30,132

1. Basis of preparation of the Financial Statements

The Financial Statements have been prepared using the historical cost convention and in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities. The Financial Statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice - "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" and with applicable accounting standards.

The books of account are kept on a Receipts and Payments basis in accordance with Charity Commission advice for a charity of this size. The Financial Statements have been prepared making adjustments to reflect timing differences between the receipt and payment of monies and the year in which the activity takes place.

Payments of deposits to landlords in respect of rent obligations have been carried forward as debtors.

2. Fund Accounting

General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity and which have not been designated for specific purposes.

Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with the specific restrictions imposed by donors and which have been raised by the charity for particular purposes.

3. Incoming Resources

All incoming resources are included in the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with accuracy.

Gifts in Kind donated to the charity are included at valuation (subject to de minimis) and recognised as income at the time of receipt.

No amounts are included in the Financial Statements for services donated by volunteers. Donated services or facilities are included in income (subject to de minimis) at a valuation which is an estimate of the financial cost borne by the donor where such cost is quantifiable and measureable.

Income Tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid is recognised at the time funds are received from HMRC.

4 Resource expended

All expenditure is accounted for at the time the funds are expended, except where detailed in note 1 above. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to one particular activity they have been allocated, so far as is practicable, on a basis consistent with the use of the resources.

Governance costs are those incurred in connection with the administration of the charity and in compliance with constitutional and statutory requirements.

Report of the Independent Examiner to the trustees of Montessori Education for Autism for the year ended 31 December 2020.

Respective Responsibilities of the trustees and of the Examiner.

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- (1) examine the accounts under section 145 of the Act;
- (2) follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Act), and
- (3) state whether particular matters have come to my attention.


Basis of Independent Examiner's statement.

My examination was carried out in accordance with General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent Examiner's statement.

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the requirements to:

keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Act and to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Act, have not been met, and furthermore, there are no matters to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.


M. Pollak
London.

26th March, 2021

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 December 2020.

The trustees present their Annual Report together with the Financial Statements of Montessori Education for Autism ('the charity' also 'MEfA') for the year ended 31 December 2020. The trustees confirm that the Annual Report and Financial Statements of the charity comply with current statutory requirements, the requirements of the charity's governing document and the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities".

Covid 19

Any report on 2020 has to start with a review of the impact on MEfA of covid 19, and of the charity's response.

With much sadness we closed all classes during the morning of Tuesday March 17th, anticipating by four days the government announcement of the closure of all educational establishments. No formal activities took place until classes recommenced on September 8th. The impact on the charity, its people and its finances appeared potentially devastating.

In addition to the closure of classes, we also cancelled our conferences planned for June and October and the SEN Part 2 training planned for September. An Autumn Waldon training weekend took place in November on a restricted and socially distanced format principally to assist students who needed the accreditation. Our budgets had been based on all these events making a positive contribution to our finances. In addition, we cancelled the Summer Party for our families and the Christmas meal in December. These two events, whilst being revenue 'neutral', are seen as important elements in bringing the MEfA family together.

MEfA attendance at the November Montessori Retreat in Holland, and the Montessori Europe autumn conference also suffered. All the costs of these two events are matched by private donations so that there is no cost to the charity. However, there resulted a significant loss of the Gift Aid that would have arisen on the donations.

Nevertheless, the resilience of our people and of our financial model saw us through this difficult period. We were pleased to be the recipient of special covid related grants which we acknowledge elsewhere in our list of donors. It should also be emphasised that MEfA could not have survived without taking full advantage of the government furlough scheme.

During the second half of the Summer, MEfA did invite families to make use of the Forest School – one family per day – without charge, and we were delighted that families taking up this offer included several who did not themselves have access to a secure outdoor area where children could play, work and explore whilst expending their excess energy. We were proud to welcome them back to MEfA and it was pleasing that all the expense and work creating the outdoor Forest School over the last two years was being appreciated.

MEfA has been pleased to welcome back many of our pre-covid families since September as well as an intake of new families, many of whom have used the period of lockdown to reassess their aspirations for their children's education. Coronavirus protocols have dictated that we can cope only with reduced numbers. This is a situation which is unlikely to improve well into the new year, placing continuing strain on our people and our finances.

This was followed by the second lockdown in November. Thanks to the resilience of the 'anti-covid' protocols put in place during the Summer, MEfA was able to continue to operate safely through November. Nevertheless, although unquantifiable, we believe that there was further adverse effect on the funds we generated during that period.

It is customary for the trustees to record their thanks elsewhere in this report to the staff, volunteers and donors for everything that they have done for MEfA and for their supportive enthusiasm during the year. However, this year, this is a more appropriate place in which to mark the exceptional, proactive and constructive input of everyone involved in MEfA, including, of course, the MEfA families. The executive managers also wish to place on record their thanks for the support and trust placed in them by their fellow trustees.

Structure, governance and management:

a) Organisational structure and decision making:

Trustees

All trustees give their time voluntarily and received no benefits from the charity in their role as Trustees.

The trustees consider that the Board of Trustees provides a wide spectrum of experience to MEfA. This experience covers autism, special needs education, the principles of learning devised by Dr Maria Montessori and others and also provides an insight into care and education in countries other than the United Kingdom.

b) Risk Management

The trustees are aware of their obligations and the need to provide a safe, healthy environment in which staff, volunteers, visitors and clients and their families can have confidence.

Policies are in place, and are reviewed on a regular basis, covering, inter alia, Protection of Children and Vulnerable People; Health and Safety, Use of Cameras and Mobile Recording Devices, Data Protection and Staff, Trustee and Visitor protocols, which include induction into the ethics, standards and procedures of MEfA.

Objectives and Activities:

a) Aims and Objectives

Our charity's objectives are as set out in The Objects clause of our constitution which was adopted on 28 February 2009. In summary, these are to benefit the public by advancing the education of children with autism (and conditions related to autism) through methods of learning and education developed by Dr Maria Montessori

A full report on our activities in 2020 and how we have strived to achieve these objectives appears at the section headed Achievements and Performance below and in our Covid 19 report above.

b) Public Benefit

This year, again, all of our activities have provided immediate and visible benefit to those with special needs (principally autism related), their families and their carers. MEfA aims to keep its objects under review and to continue directing its energies to those who may benefit from the expertise of its people.

Achievements and Performance:

a) Activity Report

All our child and parent activities, and assessments, are held at Montessori House. These groups continue their evolution from an Early Intervention Class for very small children and their parents with a strong focus on developing children's social, sensory, communication, language and coordination skills. Our flagship project, the Montessori Moles after-school nurture group for children ages 4-11 years, often operating at capacity, helping children who are struggling to access their education at primary school because of difficulties associated with autism, such as sensory issues, social, communication and physical difficulties, anxiety, low self-esteem and poor self-regulation which often leads to behavioural problems.

We now have the following groups running each week during term time:

- Baby Montessori (children aged up to 12-15 months);
- Toddler Montessori (children aged from 15-36 months: 2 weekly groups);
- Montessori Inclusive School (children aged from 2-9 years: 3 weekly groups);
- Montessori Moles: After-School Nurture Group (aged 4-12 years: 1 weekly group);
- Forest School / Wellbeing Sessions (two weekly groups);
- After School Montessori Enrichment Group (aged 4-12 years: 1 weekly group).

We are hugely indebted to the number of volunteers and interns who have supported our activities this year; we have a continuing stream of interest and enquiries about this aspect of our work. We are grateful also to the young people from overseas who have spent time with us in spite of the cumbersome procedure of obtaining the necessary visas.

By 31st December 2020 we had completed 20 cohorts of the MEfA Montessori post-graduate SEN CPD Short Course: Part 1 - A Blueprint for Observation, and as a result we have trained teachers, psychologists, social workers, early years educators, parents, a choreographer, an environmental designer, and other masters-grade students so they can apply Montessori special education methodology and philosophy to their work, thus providing other avenues for reaching out to children and adults with autism. We are also justifiably proud of our increasing professional links with mainstream organisations. Cohort 21 commenced on 9th January 2020.

Following the successful Waldon training weekends in prior years, one further course covering the theory and practicalities of Waldon therapy training took place in 2020, in partnership with Carol Mannion and Ann Marie Palmer, both experts in Waldon therapy training.

In 2020 a reduced number of children registered to our various sessions at Montessori House which was to be expected, and it seems that there will be an ongoing requirement for social distancing in the coming months, which will again limit the numbers that register with us and thus enable us to meet the restrictions.

b) Financial matters

b.1) Funding

The total income of MEfA for 2020 was £115,847 (2019 - £116,608). Expenditure amounted to £104,360 (against £115,614 in 2019). General overheads in 2020 amounted to £1,859 (2019 - £2,941). The Trustees believe that this level of overhead is acceptable for a charity of this size and includes: Subscriptions made, Insurance, Fundraising, Bank and credit card charges and Professional Fees. They consider the reduction against the 2019 figure to be a fair result of efforts made to control expenditure.

These financial results reflect the exceptionally challenging fundraising climate faced by MEfA in 2020, but also demonstrate the responsive manner in which the trustees have been able to match the expenditure to the income available.

The trustees attach great importance and commensurate effort into raising as much of our financial needs from the activities run on a regular basis, and thereby minimise our dependence upon grants from outside donors. This policy will continue during 2021 Nevertheless, MEfA is extremely grateful to the donors listed below, and acknowledges that such donations will continue to be a vital part of our funding programme.

b.2) Donations

During 2020, grants, donations (including in kind) and funds were received from the following:

The Julia & Hans Rausing Charitable Trust (Special Covid Fund)
The Kelly Family Charitable Trust (Special Covid Fund)
The Stephen Taylor Foundation
The Bimal Family
Royal Borough of Greenwich (Neighbourhood Growth Fund)
Greenwich GoodGym (who were unable to visit in 2020, but whose previous work continued to enhance the MEfA environment throughout 2020)
The Page Family
The Stanton Family
Design for Print

MEfA is grateful to all donors, including many whose time has been freely given but are not acknowledged above.

b.3) Expenditure

As noted elsewhere, trustees are not reimbursed in respect of their activities as trustees and no expenses have been reimbursed to trustees during the year.

In accordance with Charity Commission guidelines the accounts have been kept using the receipts and payments method. In the Financial Statements, Deposit rents paid to agents of the landlord in respect of the properties at 135 and 135A Westcombe Hill are carried forward as prepayments. Payment of certain expenses (principally Insurance) for 2021 has been made in December and is carried forward as a prepayment.

Investment Review

MEfA funds not immediately required are held on a bank deposit account. In this time of continuing negligible investment returns, the trustees consider that any extra returns that may be earned by seeking other uses for funds are outweighed by the inherent risks in taking such action.

Phyllis Wallbank MBE

Phyllis Wallbank was a close associate of Maria Montessori and graciously agreed to become our Patron at the time of the founding of MEfA. In spite of failing health, Phyllis retained this position until news of her death came through at the beginning of 2020.

We are grateful for her support in our early days, and of the prestige that her association with us gave to MEfA.

Plans for the future

At the time of preparation of this report, the outlook for 2021 remains very unclear, in spite of the medical advances being made with Covid vaccines.

The gratitude of our MEfA families that we are still there to offer them support has been gratifying. We are confident that, whatever challenges are encountered, we will continue to offer as full a range as possible of activities through 2021.

This report was approved by the Trustees on 8th January 2021 and signed on their behalf by:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wendy Fidler". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Wendy" and last name "Fidler" clearly distinguishable.

Wendy Fidler

Testimonials

Thank you for a wonderful year and for all of your interest in and concern for all of our babies! I've got so much out of this year, so thank you thank you thank you!!

A Mum - Montessori Baby class

- 1, M has chances to interact with his peers . . .
- 2, Mum gets to see how he interacts with peers . . .
- 3, The structured settings . . . provide M with much needed stability
- 4, M loves going to Moles. He is always excited to go . . .
- 5, Most typical after school activities are impossible for us. . . I don't know of another organisation offering what you do and it enriches our life.

A Mum - Montessori Moles (Special Needs after school club)

Thank you so much for your input over the last two years with A and E. They have benefitted from such a wonderful experience and learned so much.

Another Mum

. . . I am having a hard time putting my gratitude into words but I hope you know how much I appreciate all of your help and love over the past five years. You have changed my life and are inspiration that anything is possible . . . Thank you for all you taught me.

A former staff member

First of all, Happy New Year! . . . 2019 was already an amazing year and I feel thankful to life for bringing me toward you and the Montessori Community. Thank you for all you have already done . . .

SEN post-graduate student - cohort 20, January 2020

I would like to say what a wonderful experience G has had at MEFA. She has learnt so much. How to share, eye and hand co-ordination, to wait her turn, how to mix with other children . . .

Another Mum

Testimonials - 2020

The MEfA session texts and great articles gave me all the ideas and guidance on how to start my research and I will keep these treasures in a very precious place on my shelf and forever in my heart.

I have thoroughly enjoyed the MEfA course, which helped me not only gain more knowledge on different special educational needs, but also gave me great confidence to talk about it to parents, as well as share my knowledge with my colleagues.

A Cohort 20 student

Dear Wendy,

Thank you very much for the programme (*for M, during Lockdown*). It is fantastic, we are implementing it well.

. . . .

Thank you very much for all your help, support and reassurance, having you in our lives is a great privilege!

M's Mum (June 2020)

Dear Wendy,

I just wanted to send you, Rathi and the rest of your team a huge thank you for your support and tutelage since September. We really appreciate the time you have spent planning the session and personalising the activities for R. I think this has made an enormous difference and helped F to make some progress this term.

Thank you also for making J (*sibling*) so welcome.

Moreover, even in these uncertain waters, MEfA has always remained a steady and constant vessel. Your commitment and bravery is incredibly admirable and we have been very grateful for this.

L - a Mum (December 2020)

"I have such fond memories of your Montessori preschool at Mycenae House. I remember you introduced me to the concept of children working hard through observation, that they are constantly learning even when they don't appear to be actively engaged."

The Mum of a former toddler pupil reaching his 11th birthday.

I discovered Montessori's Method, fell in love with it and qualified as a Montessori teacher. After that I did a post grad diploma with Montessori Education for Autism. What I learnt gave me the confidence to dismantle the various methods, choose what I needed, and re-build them into my own version. . . (Thank you Wendy Fidler)

Chi Boakye (SEN Training, Cohort 4)