

Charity Number 1136552

Montessori Education for Autism

Report of the Trustees
and
Independently Examined Financial Statements
for the year ended 31 December 2023

Montessori Education for Autism

Contents

	Page
Trustees of the Charity	1
Reference and administrative details of the charity	1
Statement of Financial Activities	2
Balance Sheet	3
Notes to the Financial Statements	4 - 5
Accounting Policies	6
Report of the Independent Examiner	7
Report of the Trustees	8 - 12
Testimonials	13

Montessori Education for Autism

Trustees of the Charity

Wendy Fidler	**	<i>Chair, Academic Director</i>
Roger Patenall	**	<i>Treasurer</i>
Shalini Modi	**	
Katalin Lovassy		
Ashok Kumar		
Rachel Spooner		
David Stott		
Delphine Marcillaud		
Nick Tedstone		<i>Appointed April 28th 2023</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

Third Sector Protect

Montessori Education for Autism

Statement of Financial Activities

for the year ended 31 December 2023

		Restricted Funds 2023 £	Unrestricted Funds 2023 £	Total Funds 2023 £	<i>Total funds 2022 £</i>
	Note				
Incoming resources					
Voluntary income	1		75,366	75,366	75,663
Activities	2		21,632	21,632	25,632
Investment Income	3		296	296	78
Total Incoming Resources		<u>0</u>	<u>97,294</u>	<u>97,294</u>	<u>101,373</u>
Resources Expended					
Charitable activities	4		107,429	107,429	105,476
Governance costs	5		600	600	1,036
Total resources expended		<u>0</u>	<u>108,029</u>	<u>108,029</u>	<u>106,512</u>
Movement in total funds for the year		0	(10,735)	(10,735)	
Total funds at 1 January 2022		0	29,573	29,573	
Total funds at 31 December 2022		<u>0</u>	<u>18,838</u>	<u>18,838</u>	

Montessori Education for Autism

Balance Sheetas at 31 December 2023

	Note	2023		2022	
		£	£	£	£
Current Assets					
Petty Cash Floats		372		-	
Debtors	7	3,481		6,006	
Total at Bank		15,696		23,927	
		<u>19,549</u>		<u>29,933</u>	
Creditors					
Due within one year	8	731		360	
		<u>18,818</u>		<u>29,573</u>	
		18,818		29,573	
Charity Funds					
Unrestricted Funds	9	18,818		29,573	
Restricted Funds	9	-		-	
		<u>18,818</u>		<u>29,573</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 April 28th, 2024
and signed on their behalf by:



Roger Patenall FCA

Montessori Education for Autism

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 31 December 2023

	Restricted Funds 2023 £	Unrestricted Funds 2023 £	Total Funds 2023 £	Total Funds 2022 £
1 Voluntary Income				
Donations		57,870	57,870	57,758
Gift Aid		17,496	17,496	17,905
	-	75,366	75,366	75,663
2 Income from Activities				
Registrations	-	420	420	350
Donations to Nurture Groups	-	18,760	18,760	15,802
Donations for SEN & Waldon Training	-	1,760	1,760	7,040
Proceeds of Insurance claim			-	1,727
Other fundraising	-	692	692	713
	-	21,632	21,632	25,632
3 Investment Income				
Bank Interest		296	296	78
4 Expenditure on Charitable Activity				
Summary by Fund Type:				
General Overheads		1,862	1,862	4,376
Administration costs		6,314	6,314	11,121
Purchase of Piano			-	2,000
Nurture Groups		91,943	91,943	81,327
Training		7,285	7,285	7,548
MEfA Fundraising Events		645	645	140
	-	108,049	108,049	106,512
Summary by expenditure type:				
Overheads and Admin		8,176	8,176	17,497
Nurture Groups		91,943	91,943	81,327
Training		7,285	7,285	7,548
MEfA Conference & Events		645	645	140
		108,049	108,049	106,512

Montessori Education for Autism

Notes to the Financial Statements, continued

	2023	2022			
	£	£			
5	Employee				
	In 2023 there was one employee (2022 - 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	600	500		
	Visa Licence renewal		536		
			-		
		600	1,036		
7	Net Income				
	This is stated after charging Accountancy Fees £600 (2022 - £500)				
	During the year, no Trustee received any remuneration for acting as a Trustee (2022 - nil)				
	During the year, no Trustee received any benefits in kind (2022- nil)				
	During the year, no Trustee received any reimbursement of expenses (2022 - nil)				
8	Debtors				
	Prepayments	731	-		
	Donation Pledged	-	3,256		
	Sundry Debtors	2,750	2,750		
9	Creditors				
	Expenses to be settled within one year	731			
##	Statement of funds	Brought Forward	Incoming Resources	Resources Expended	Carried Forward
		£	£	£	£
	Unrestricted funds	29,573	97,294	108,049	18,818
	Restricted funds	0			0
		29,573	97,294	108,049	18,818

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 2023.

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.

Richard W Carey
London.

24th April, 2024

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 December 2023

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 2023. 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.

Objectives and Activities.

The principal objectives of the charity, as defined by the Constitution, are:

- 1) to advance education of children with autism (and conditions related to autism) through methods of learning and education developed by Dr Maria Montessori and in connection with this:
- 2) to provide advice and support to families and carers of children with autism.
- 3) to provide information, advisory and advocacy services, training, day services, education, leisure and recreation for children with autism and to support others making similar provision.
- 4) to promote, conduct and engage in research into autism, and to publish the useful results of such research.
- 5) to collect and disseminate information relating to autism and to exchange such information with other bodies having similar objects.

The principal activities of the charity, are to:

- 1) provide classes during term time aimed at all children, but principally those with special education needs.
- 2) provide post-graduate training to professionals and others with interest in the development of children and the principles of Montessori Education
- 3) provide input to conferences and workshops, both those organized by the charity and by third parties.
- 4) provide support to families and schools by means of telephone and email helplines, and by personal meetings and presentations.

Public Benefit and delivering Social Value

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

Structure, governance and management:

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.

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.

Achievements and Performance:

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 4-12 years, is 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 18 months);
- Toddler Montessori (children aged from 15–36 months);
- Montessori Inclusive School (children aged from 2-12 years: 5 weekly groups);
- Montessori Moles: After-School Nurture Group (aged 4-12 years);
- Forest School / Wellbeing Sessions (two weekly groups for all ages);

We are hugely indebted to the number of volunteers and interns who have supported our activities again 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 spend time with us in spite of the procedure of obtaining the necessary visas.

By 31 December 2023 we had completed 24 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.

During the year MEfA was saddened by the news of the death of Carol Mannion. Carol had been a staunch supporter of MEfA in every activity. She had made memorable contributions at most MEfA conferences and had been an inspiration at the Waldon courses. In her memory it was decided that the Waldon course to be held in November 2023 would be free of charge to all delegates. Donations totalling £1,000 were however made to MEfA in her memory by several delegates.

In 2023 the number of children registered to our various sessions at Montessori House remained below the level pre-pandemic. This was expected and our budgets were reduced accordingly. Building up to our pre-pandemic level of activity is taking time and, although as the year progressed, enquiries picked up and we are starting 2024 with moderate activity in all classes.

Financial matters

Funding

The total income of MEfA for 2023 was £97,294 (2022 - £101,373). Expenditure amounted to £108,029 (£106,512 in 2022). General overheads in 2023 amounted to £1,862 (2022 - £4,376). Every item of expenditure has been scrutinised and the reduction in overhead reflects this. 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.

These financial results reflect the ongoing challenging fundraising climate faced by MEfA in 2023, but also demonstrate the responsive manner in which the trustees have been able to match much of the expenditure to the income available. In line with many organisations in similar sectors, it is proving challenging to match our existing financial model to the increases in energy and utility costs. The trading loss of £10,700 in the accounts is accounted for by both a shortfall in parent donations for classes and increases in utility costs.

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 2024 and we expect the coming year to be equally challenging. 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.

During 2023 grants, donations (including donations in kind) and funds were received from the following:

The Stephen Taylor Foundation
The Bimal Family
The Souter Charitable Trust
Royal Borough of Greenwich (Neighbourhood Growth Fund)
The Page Family
The Elder Family
The Arthur Family
The Staal Family
Design for Print
Shalini Modi
Babs Oduwale
Mrs Anne Goodman
Dr Asmita Mistry
Paola Torrani

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

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 insurance premia for 2024 has been made in December 2023 on behalf of the charity. The charge is carried forward as a prepayment whilst a creditor is carried forward for reimbursement of the payment to the insurer. Deposits received in advance of future year programmes are carried forward as creditors.

During the latter part of the year, our existing energy supply agreements terminated. The new contracts are not strictly comparable as the terms are not as 'consumer-friendly' as the expiring contracts. However, the initial indications are that energy costs will rise by at least 75%.

Reserves

The trustees are aware that the level of reserves is below an ideal level. All leaseholds are subject to three month notice of cancellation periods and the landlord holds deposits against much of this liability. Other than these leases the charity has no liabilities.

MEfA funds not immediately required are held on a bank deposit account. Investment returns have, for some years, been negligible. However, the last six months of 2023 generated income and we hope that this will now accelerate. 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

Plans for the future and appreciation

At the time of preparation of this report, the outlook for 2024 remains very unclear, in spite of the success of the Covid vaccines programme there still remains the possibility of future infection.

Our Forest School continues to be developed and is evolving with an eye to the future. Elsewhere our plans are all focussed on preparation of the environment and, in particular, staff training , to ensure that we are well prepared as numbers of children attending MEfA continue to build up.

We are confident that, whatever challenges are encountered, we will continue to offer as full a range as possible of activities through 2024. MEfA, in turn, could not operate without the continuing efforts of our staff, volunteers, donors and families for which we place on record our heartfelt thanks.

This report was approved by the Trustees on 28th April 2024 and signed on their behalf by:



Wendy Fidler

Montessori Education for Autism

Testimonials

I cannot thank you and the staff at MEfA enough for welcoming us in and giving A (and all of us!) those months of nurtured learning. I remember the warm and comforting atmosphere of your classrooms with fondness. I think it made the world of difference to be in that setting after A's bad experience and all of his family members who accompanied him there really appreciated that.

Dr R P

Hi Wendy . . . I just wanted to say thank you so much for your help with the girls. We really enjoy attending and we've learnt so much already. Sorry if I'm a bit distracted when you speak to me, I'm always making mental notes . . .

MF

We met when you came to X School some years ago to do some staff training . . . Your talk was fascinating and has stayed with me to this day. . . I now work at X College (Nursery through to 6th form) and wonder if you still offer staff training. It would be of great benefit to our SEND team and better equip us to meet the needs of some of our children?

Mrs S G

. . . I just wanted to thank you again for the most wonderful, captivating, emotional, inspiring and educational course I have ever been on. Your vast knowledge of how to use Montessori materials for children with special needs is something I will never forget . . .

Katherine N. a delegate at the Bergen conference workshop day

I have just attended the lecture and heard your closing comments. I just wanted to share my excitement at having your voice heard. I feel you have opened my eyes into a world I was not fully aware of. . . . I would love to find ways to improve my abilities and learn more ways to help (these children) to integrate in the class.

D, a teacher from Israel

I'd like to enrol on the second part of the course as I really enjoyed Part 1 . . . Cohort 23 has been for me life changing . . .

DC - An Italian student

I wish to convey my profound appreciation to my lecturer and thesis supervisor. Professor Wendy Fidler, Her continual source of inspiration, steadfast support, and intellectual provocations have not merely piqued my interest but have significantly broadened my comprehension and insight into the Montessori Pedagogy and MEfA Methodology.

PT - Another Italian student

Montessori Education for Autism

Testimonials

I Am currently pursuing my diploma course in SLD from India and just cannot forget the journey I had in MEFA. Thank you for the immense knowledge that you shared. As I'm doing my project I just can't stop thinking about my time in your school. Thank you so much

Sapna U. (SEN graduate)

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 R 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)