MADRID MONTESSORI SCHOOL
MADRID, SPAIN
HEAD OF SCHOOL
POSITION START DATE: JULY 1ST, 2018
madridmontessori.org
OVERVIEW

Madrid Montessori School, an American school in Madrid’s El Viso neighborhood offering an education to children 18 months to 12 years old, seeks a Head of School effective July 2018.

For a still-new school, Madrid Montessori is remarkably strong and honors both the spirit as well as the practice of its commitment to true Montessori method in a bilingual program. The only Montessori school located within Madrid-proper, it is valued by the families it serves for both its program and location. It is also to the school’s credit that it quickly gained accreditation by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools under its Designing Our Future program. This is a unique opportunity for an educator who is passionate about Montessori education and seeks to bring further growth to a school with a strong community and dedication to its students.

SCHOOL HISTORY

Madrid Montessori was founded in 2006 with the aim to offer a respectful, nurturing learning environment for children. It started out as a one-room schoolhouse in Chamberí, Madrid, where 12 families shared the same holistic vision of childhood. In 2009, the school moved to calle Henares, in Madrid’s El Viso neighborhood with two Children’s Houses for three- to six-year-olds. In the years since, the school has continued to grow steadily and add new programs, including an Elementary program and an Infant Community. In 2016, the school found its definitive El Viso home, and has moved all of its programs under one roof at calle Genil, 11.
THE SCHOOL

To uphold and safeguard the standards of schools following the method and the quality of the training of its guides worldwide, Dr. Montessori established Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) in 1929. Madrid Montessori follows the core educational philosophy in accordance with AMI standards. All guides at the school are AMI diploma holders, meaning they completed a rigorous training program with contents including: the necessary pedagogical tools, the in-depth study of the psychological and physical development of children, the practice of respectful observation, and the self-reflection that is required of all guides.

As an American school in Madrid, Madrid Montessori is recognized by both the educational authorities of the United States of America though the Middle States Association (MSA) and the Consejería de Educación de la Comunidad de Madrid. In 2012, MSA, granted the school full accreditation. This organization supports educational institutions that strive for excellence and are committed to continual self-evaluation and improvement. Recognition ensures that the school’s program meets the high-quality standards of many private schools in the Mid-Atlantic region of the U.S.

ACADEMICS

At Madrid Montessori, education is viewed as a lifelong process, and in order to give children a solid foundation the school offers specially prepared learning environments that are attractive and suited to a child’s successive developmental stages. These environments are designed to develop the children’s inner resources, sharpen their problem-solving skills, and strengthen their sense of self as a way to help children achieve their goals. The program and philosophy nurture children with respect, responsibility, and an appreciation of diversity.
The teachers, or guides, at Madrid Montessori do not impart knowledge to the group, but approach children offering “lessons” one-on-one or in small groups, and then step back to observe. A crucial skill of all guides is the attentive observation of the children at work. This continual feedback then enables the guide to assess the children’s evolving interests, mastery of skills, and consolidation of information.

Madrid Montessori’s alumni are eligible to transfer to any educational institution, either in Spain or abroad. The school works closely with each family to ensure that each child is prepared for the choice that best suits them.

**INFANT COMMUNITY**

Children between 18 months and three years of age experience a language-rich environment with opportunities for movement, exploration, and interaction with peers. Each child develops a sense of autonomy and self-esteem, and establishes relationships with others in a warm, supportive, and respectful community. Age- and developmentally-appropriate activities that help children refine gross motor skills while becoming familiar with their capabilities are abundant, and they develop their self-confidence in a short and intense period.

**CHILDREN’S HOUSE**

Specifically designed for three- to six-year-olds, Children’s House nourishes a child’s need to be able to develop skills to become independent. A “structured autonomy” in the classroom gives students clear ground rules on how to function, and gives them a solid and consistent base which enables them to thrive as individuals. The Children’s House has a clearly defined, sequential curriculum with five
main areas: practical life, sensorial, language, mathematics, and culture (geography, history, science, arts, and music). The Guide and Assistant in each classroom plan tangible learning opportunities for children that fit the curriculum and offer chances for additional growth and exploration.

**Elementary**

The age group within the Elementary curriculum is characterized by ambition and industriousness. Students ages six through 12 are engaged in the classroom by imagination, abstraction, and reasoning as they learn to ask more questions and understand the world around them.

To respond to a child’s need to understand the universe, the integrated Elementary curriculum examines subject areas like math, language, and physical sciences both individually and in relation with each other. This interdisciplinary approach responds to the child’s desire to understand the ‘big picture’, while leaving room for creative exploration of topics of interest. The Elementary curriculum is structured around five stories: the creation of the universe, life on Earth, the coming of human beings, communication with signs, and the story of our numerals. Each story is a jumping off point for each major academic subject, intended to ignite the imagination and plant the seeds of interest for investigation into larger subjects. Children in Elementary also receive lessons in Spanish language, culture, and history. Field trips organized by the children themselves provide answers to the questions they seek in the classroom and help them feel part of the larger community, thus discovering society and their place in it.
Music and Arts

At Madrid Montessori, individual and collective artistic expression—drawing, playing instruments, acting, singing, making a collage or a sculpture—is part of the school day. Musical instruments are on hand for children to explore and play at any time. A variety of art materials—paints and pencils, as well as sewing, cutting and pasting utensils—are accessible to them on the shelves, just like all other learning materials. Several times a day there are opportunities to sing in small and large groups.

In addition, the school currently offers a number of extracurricular music programs, including private lessons in piano and guitar. The school also offers a Music and Movement class and an Elementary Chorus.

All music students have the opportunity to perform in recitals during the school year, and in the spring the school hosts a concert at a local auditorium that has been a highlight of the school year for the musicians and school community.

School Life

Parents choose Madrid Montessori because they have in common with the school not only an educational philosophy but also a belief in the close interrelationship between family life and school life. As parents do, the school takes a long view of education, seeing it like other aspects of children’s development—a multi-year process with milestones and plateaus. The school was founded on the principle that open and fluid communication between families and the school is essential to help each child reach his or her potential, and the administration and guides welcome parents into an ongoing dialogue. The school also encourages parents who can, to share their time, energy, and talents as volunteers.
Oppotunities and Challenges

Madrid Montessori is a wonderful school in many ways, with a strong program and a deep commitment to its mission. In a very short space of time, it has grown from concept to a full program. Everyone in the community – founders, faculty, staff and parents – feels great pride in what they have accomplished. It is exciting to think that so strong a beginning can be carried into a long-term future for the school.

At the same time, however, the school is very much at a crossroads. Much has happened in a short space of time and clear and firm steps need to be taken to assure that the program is sustainable. Important questions that the school is now addressing include the most effective form of governance for the future, how to achieve financial sustainability, and sustaining the morale of the community. The coming months and years will be critically important.

Strengths of the school:
• A true Montessori school;
• Concern and respect for the whole child;
• An emphasis on holistic education, socialization, and development of intellectual curiosity;
• A strong sense of community and a family feel;
• Small size and a safe environment;
• Strong faculty, all trained in Montessori method;
• A new facility that supports the program;
• A bilingual environment.
Greatest challenges facing the school:
• The impact of transition – of leadership as well as to the new campus;
• The impact of significant enrollment growth since the founding of the school;
• Need for better communication and transparency, both internally (faculty and staff) and externally (current and prospective parents);
• Financial sustainability;
• Stabilizing faculty compensation and clarifying compensation policy;
• Clarifying operating policies and procedures;
• Student retention in Elementary School;
• Uncertainty about school placement after Elementary.

**Desired Qualifications and Qualities of the Head of School**

• Demonstrated leadership experience, preferably international, and an effective manager;
• Knowledgeable about, and supportive of, Montessori method;
• Strong people skills, able to build and lead teams;
• Strong communication (including listening) skills;
• Understands financial and budget processes;
• Genuine affection for children;
• Kind, warm, empathetic;
• Flexible, adaptable, politically astute;
• Bilingual – able to communicate effectively in Spanish and English;
• Visionary, able to think strategically;
• Energetic, enthusiastic, charismatic.
TO APPLY

Interested and qualified candidates should submit electronically in one email and as separate documents (preferably PDFs) the following materials:

• A cover letter expressing their interest in this particular position;
• A current résumé;
• A one-page statement of educational philosophy and practice;
• A list of five (5) professional references with name, phone number, and email address of each (references will be contacted only with the candidate’s permission) to:

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