One of the oldest Montessori schools in Perth, The Beehive started in 1977 with less than 20 children, under the guidance of a Mrs Renee Taylor. The building in which they operated was a fairly non-descript hall, but this start represented the culmination of a dream for Mrs Taylor and the first group of enthusiastic parents.

Today The Beehive Montessori School is situated in purpose-built premises beside the sea in Mosman Park with over 210 students. Separate areas cater for groups of 3 to 6 year olds, 6 to 9 year olds, 9 to 12 year olds and 12-15 year olds.

The design of the school is very much open plan, with each area fully equipped with Montessori materials. This specially designed equipment is beautifully made from predominantly natural materials and is mostly purchased, with some being made by the teachers themselves.

With a Montessori education, the people leading the children in the learning areas are often referred to as “directors and directresses”. All have qualifications acceptable to the State Education Department but have also gained, or are studying for, additional Montessori qualifications.

The remainder of staff at the school comprise part-time specialists, instructors, assistants and administrative staff.

What exactly is a MONTESSORI EDUCATION?

Maria Montessori was Italy’s first female doctor and a dedicated educator. In the late 1800s, she created a method of education based on a child’s own innate desire for learning. She tested her theories over several decades and established the principles upon which Montessori schools all over the world now operate.

A MONTESSORI EDUCATION is based on the belief that:

- Education is an aid to life and a preparation for it.
- The potential for each individual’s development should be respected and nurtured.
- A complete education involves the integration of intellectual, emotional, spiritual, physical and social aspects of life.
- The experiences in school should be linked with “the outside world”.
- Learning occurs in a variety of ways and should be suited to each child’s individual needs.
- Learning is largely active, often self-correcting, individually paced and unlimited in scope.
- There should be a diversity of social groupings.
- The adult’s role is one of a guide and observer.
- The environment “reaches” the child through richness, order, scale and attractiveness.
- Balancing freedom and discipline results in a larger capacity for self-direction.

How are the MONTESSORI PRINCIPLES applied?

All sessions at The Beehive are largely unscheduled to allow for greater choice and concentration. Lessons are usually given to individuals or small groups and the children also teach each other. Classes are grouped according to different stages of development:

Junior Primary 3-6 years
Children work to develop themselves in the setting of the prepared environment. Five areas of activity help them to achieve this:

1. Practical Life Exercises: These exercises encourage the child’s own independence through learning to care for oneself, others and the environment. It also establishes the standard Montessori work cycle: a project is chosen, completed and returned to its location, ready for another person to use.

2. Sensorial Apparatus: Awakens the mind to the stimuli that are received through the senses, which are then named, classified and extended.

3. Language Programme: Makes the child aware of the sounds of speech and then associates symbols with those sounds. The concepts of writing, reading and the beginnings of grammar are introduced. It is all done in a meaningful way that makes sense to the child, rather than simply teaching them by rote. Italian is also offered.

4. Number Work: Focuses on the decimal system and its operations. The foundations of geometry and algebra are also laid.

5. Culture:
   - Geography: The nature of the earth and its people
   - Biology: The variety of plants and animals
   - History: A sense of the progression of time and current events
   - Art & Music: Experiences of art and music and an introduction to their styles.
**Primary 6-12 years**
This level has been called “Cosmic Education” to denote the breadth of its scope. It aims to expose the children to the structure of understanding in most subject areas and it is divided into two stages - 6 to 9 years and 9 to 12 years, covering:

1. **History:** On this subject, the child is given an overview from the beginning of life through to the study of their own country. This includes natural evolution, prehistoric man and research into early civilisations. The preparation and potential for human kind are emphasised.
2. **Geography:** Looks into the structure of the earth, its relation to the sun, the zones of vegetation, the work of wind and water and the nature of the elements. Economic and political geography are also covered.
3. **Biology:** Reveals the diversity of forms and functions in botany and zoology. It culminates in their classification. An ecological viewpoint results from these studies.
4. **Language:** The history of speech and writing, grammar, syntax and composition are studied. Italian lessons are also offered.
5. **Maths:** Includes operations, powers of numbers, the decimal system, other number-base systems, negative numbers, fractions and algebra.
6. **Geometry:** Investigates two and three dimensional shapes and the calculation of areas and volumes.
7. **Art & Music:** Here, the techniques and range of art and music are further explored.
8. **Physical Education:** Here the fundamental movement skills are learnt and the introduction of team sports.

Typically, the Primary child can be characterised by his or her social orientation, questioning mind and unlimited energy for research and exploration, both within and outside of the school environment. They will fulfil their needs provided they have the necessary skills and confidence to accomplish these tasks.

“Going out” is an important part of the programme, giving exposure to many aspects of the society and world in which they live. Our intention is that the children will be well prepared and confident in themselves, yet orientated towards the well-being of all.

**Adolescent 12-15 years**
The Beehive Montessori Adolescent Programme offers an exciting opportunity for adolescents to learn in an environment that provides real life experiences and work practice that brings the curriculum to life.

Adolescence marks the beginning of transition from childhood to adulthood, and this is a challenging process of physical and mental maturation. Physically, this is a time of rapid change and intellectually this is an age of great social development, when the adolescent seeks to find their place in their society, and understand what their contribution to this might be. It is also a time of critical thinking and re-evaluation, and a period of self reflection. The Beehive Montessori Adolescent Programme recognises these special characteristics of adolescence, and is designed to assist children in their progression into the exciting adventure of finding their unique place in the world as adults.

**Study of Occupations:** aims to provide real life experiences. These projects have a strong science and mathematical emphasis and provide the students with the opportunity to work physically with their hands in conjunction with their mind. Students experience the importance of community through the work of common enterprise and develop valuable life and business skills. Some examples of occupations projects offered at The Beehive include: organic gardening, worm and chicken farming, bike maintenance and pond studies.

**Study of Humanities:** is based on following the stages of increasing complexity in human culture. Students undertake in-depth explorations of early agriculture or indigenous culture, a classical civilization, a society in transition and then the age of ideas and science.

**Maths & Science:** make up an integral part of all the occupations projects that students undertake. Mathematics lessons are also undertaken as a discrete subject area to include all elements of the National Curriculum guidelines. The objectives is the mastery of skills and cultivation of the “mathematical mind” inherent in all of us.

**English:** reading, writing, speaking & listening, is imbedded in all the work the students undertake in order for them to research, conduct seminars and practice the ability to communicate in any field of study. Study includes discrete English lessons to cover areas such as literature appreciation, the study of grammar and genre writing skills that have not been encountered through humanities or occupations projects.

**The Micro-Economy and Business Studies:** form an integral part of the syllabus and includes students operating small scale entrepreneurial ventures in the local community, such as a store supported by produce from the organic farming, a student run café and a bike repair serve. This overlap between occupations & micro-economy becomes a practical means of understanding the inter-relatedness of human activity, economics and business studies.

**LOTE:** Italian is the chosen second language at The Beehive Montessori School. By the time the students reach Year 9, they will undertake a 2-week trip to Italy which focuses on classical history and immersion in the Italian language.
Creative Expression: The adolescent demonstrates a strong need for creative and physical expression during this period of change. An opportunity for Creative Expression through the arts occurs as part of Humanities and Occupations projects and presentations and includes experience in and exposure to Drama, Music and Fine Arts.

Physical Education: One morning a week is dedicated to physical expression with focus on helping students to develop fitness as a positive lifestyle choice, and by providing exposure to a number of different physical activities, thereby fostering an enjoyable independence.

**Does the school cater for children with SPECIAL NEEDS?**

Very much. Our Education Resource Centre caters for children with heterogeneous, and in some cases multiple, disabilities to a moderate-to-severe degree, from the ages of 3 to 15. The Montessori classroom also helps us to provide the most suitable environment to meet individual children’s needs. All children are integrated to some degree into regular classrooms with all children benefiting from the interaction and understanding that evolves.

**How is the school STRUCTURED?**

The school is an incorporated body governed by a Board of up to seven members. The executive is made up of the chairperson, the secretary of the Board and its treasurer. Most Board members are parents at the school.

Various sub-committees operate to assist the Board.

Further parental involvement and participation in the school is encouraged through parental assistance with the ongoing life of the school with maintenance tasks, helping with such activities as craft, cooking and science, making equipment, accompanying children on camps and excursions, and so on.

Opportunities to improve your understanding of Montessori education and child development are provided at parent evenings, through the use of the parent library, the publication of the school magazine and by regularly observing in the classroom, followed by discussions with your child’s teacher.

**What are the SCHOOL’S HOURS?**

**Junior Primary**
- 8.30am - 1.00pm (Mon-Thur) (3 year olds)
- 8.30am - 12.30pm (Friday) (3 year olds)
- 8.30am - 3.00pm (Mon-Fri) (3-6 year olds)

Classroom doors are open from 8.30am.

Three year olds begin by attending mornings only, from 8.30-1.30pm. Around the time of their fourth birthday, children start staying at school until 3.00pm, initially on one day and gradually building up to the five full days per week.

**Primary**
- 8.30am - 3.00pm (Mon-Fri)

Classroom doors are open from 8.30am.

**Adolescent**
- 8.30am-3.30pm (Mon, Wed, Thu, Fri) &
- 8.30am-3.00pm (Tue)

**What about FEES?**

Fees are set by the school Board and are determined by budgeting needs according to the availability of subsidies from State and Federal Governments. A non-refundable application fee of $110 per child is paid on submission of an application form. For further fee structures, including information on the Enrolment Deposit and Capital Contribution payment, a current Fee Schedule is available from the office.

**What should we DO NOW?**

If you would like to know more about The Beehive Montessori School and enrolling your child, simply call in or telephone our School Secretary. She will provide you with application forms and can also make an appointment for you to attend a Visitors’ Morning and observe a class in action. Parents are expected to have observed at the school before enrolment can take place.

As is the case with any private independent schools, we generally have lengthy waiting lists for the three year old programme, so recommend you lodge your application soon.