



Malvern College Pre-school teaches students the fundamentals of coding from an early age so that they may become more adept digital citizens.

Malvern College Pre-School Hong Kong—the only kindergarten to successfully combine nature and robotics

When it comes to educating young children, it can be difficult to find the balance between teaching them about technology, while keeping them in tune with the natural world.

But at Malvern College Pre-School Hong Kong (MCPS), kids get the best of both worlds – thanks to the combination of the “Forest School” curriculum - in which students experience regular outdoor learning - and a cutting edge curriculum.

“Malvern College has 153 years of academic excellence in the UK, so when I found out about the chance to bring that to Hong Kong, I was very excited,” said founding principal Jacqueline McNalty, who has been working with childhood education for more than 26 years. “Here at Malvern, we focus on developing our kids as confident, competent and wonderful pupils of the world.”

It's hardly a surprise that in just two short years, the school, located in Coronation Circle in Yau Ma Tei, has become one of the top kindergartens in Hong Kong.

The school follows the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum with additional inspiration from the Reggio Emilia Approach. McNalty, who had worked in Singapore for seven years before heading the Malvern project in 2016, said this holistic curriculum allows students to transition seamlessly to the sister school – Malvern College Hong Kong in Tai Po that officially opened up in late August this year.

But what really sets MCPS apart from other kindergartens, McNalty said, is the amount of individual attention given to each pupil.



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Jacqueline McNalty
Founding Principal

“We promote differentiation here at Malvern; in other words, we track each individual child and give them the attention they need - their learning styles, their needs, their gifts, their talents, and also areas of development,” McNalty said. “To make sure this happens smoothly, we put a lot of effort into our hiring process, and make sure we hire teachers that are passionate about the Malvern ethos.”

Another thing that sets Malvern apart from the rest of the pack is the highly regarded Forest School programme, which was brought over from the UK school after its incredible success.



Once every two weeks, students will spend the day outdoors with their teacher and other trained professionals for various lessons and fun learning activities.

“We have two partner sites located in Sai Kung, and these include beaches, woodlands, and an organic farm with goats and rabbits,” explained McNalty. “The children get to consolidate concepts we introduce to them through the EYFS into the real world; for example, things like sustainability, water cycle, insects, and geography, are much better learned outside than in the classroom. The children have so much fun as well.”

“We believe the environment is the third teacher,” she added.

According to McNalty, research indicates that Forest School learning improves students' self-esteem and confidence, motivation, concentration, language, communication, social and fine motor skills.

In addition, MCPS also strongly supports and believes in the use of educational technologies and Artificial Intelligence in educating the child. In fact, the school has a beloved robot by the name of Zenbo – who has become an integral part of the classroom and an invaluable teaching resource.

“The pupils can programme Zenbo to do whatever they want,” McNalty said. “He's got voice activated commands, he can track and follow people, he is bilingual so he can read stories in English and Mandarin. He can greet people and dance. Right now, we are working with our robotics team to develop our own robot, to learn facial recognition, and be able to read the emotions of children.”

The school also teaches students the fundamentals of coding from an early age so that they may become more adept digital citizens. But McNalty said they're also very careful and deliberate in making sure the children are not over-stimulated with digital devices.

“We make sure that we just use technology as a tool for learning,” she said. “That's why we have the Forest School, to make sure that there is a balance.”

Finally, an often-overlooked benefit of enrolling in Malvern College is access granted to the entire Malvern network – which includes campuses in the UK, Egypt, and mainland China.

“The Malvern family is full of happy people – from the pupils, to the staff, to the parents, it's been absolutely amazing,” said McNalty, whose two sons are currently enrolled in Malvern's sister school in Tai Po. “We are a vibrant family of learners.”

