

Meet Jacqueline McNulty Founding Principal, Malvern Pre-School



Jacqueline McNulty is founding principal of Malvern College Pre-school Hong Kong. She was part of the founding team who opened the Pre-School in September 2017. Jacqueline tells us about the joys of her role and the stimulating



learning environment that her students enjoy every day.

Goodness, there are so many joys in my role!

As the Founding Principal of a world-leading international Pre-School, it has been a pleasure and a privilege to have overseen the opening of our school from its draft design phase to its excellent and smooth operation over a year later, and I credit the amazing team we have at Malvern College Pre-School Hong Kong for its contribution to making this happen.

I truly love all aspects of my job. As a morning person, I normally begin my working day around 7.00am and my team arrive close behind me. They are very dedicated, always setting up thought-provoking projects and enticing learning activities ready for our pupils when they arrive at Pre-School. I love watching the team constantly changing the learning environment, varying activities on a daily basis, according to the interest of our pupils. They are committed to doing their very best for each pupil and building such a strong and collaborative team gives me great joy.

For me, having the opportunity to bring Malvern College UK's ethos to our pupils living here in Hong Kong is a very rewarding part of my job. Each month we focus on one of the Malvern College 'Qualities' which we illustrate at our Friday assembly using early childhood stories and songs in both English and Mandarin. It is wonderful to come together as a school community and to dance and sing together.

To give MCPS pupils access to the great outdoors, via our incredible Forest School program, is certainly a great joy for me. I believe we offer an amazing opportunity to connect to nature and to learn from

nature here in Hong Kong! At Malvern College Pre-School Hong Kong, we believe that the 'environment is the third teacher' and so we are continuing to develop our innovative Forest School Program.

Every MCPS pupil will participate in Forest School once a fortnight and they will be guided by our own Level 3 Forest School Leader from the UK who works exclusively with us at MCPS. We have two fantastic Forest School sites located in Sai Kung. Both have a beach, woodland and access to diverse outdoor spaces allowing our pupils to connect and extend their learning in the EYFS curriculum.

We also continue to strengthen our Robotics program. Our MCPS pupils love our Pre-School robot 'Zenbo'. Zenbo complements our bilingual focus by speaking to our pupils and reading stories to them in both English and Mandarin. Zenbo can be operated by voice command and loves to visit classes, singing English and Mandarin songs.

*"We believe that the
'environment is the
third teacher'"*

It is a joy to welcome our pupils and parents or caretakers at the start and close of each day. These connections are very special to me as they allow me to have regular contact with our families. We have already established very strong working partnerships with our supportive parent group and we continue to strengthen these home-school connections through our monthly Class Contact meetings (Parent Class Group Representatives).

I love seeing our pupils growing up. Our pupils from last year have now moved up into the next class year group and seeing their progress and development is so rewarding for us all. Certainly, one of the greatest delights is working with our beautiful MCPS pupils and their families. To see each pupil skipping happily into school because they can't wait to start their session, and even (sometimes) crying at the end of the day because they don't want to leave us, is not only an absolute joy to witness but it helps us to know that we are doing a great job.

Malvern College Pre-School Hong Kong

*Reggia Emilia philosophy and early
years Forest School*



Malvern College Pre-School Hong Kong (MCPS) recognises the importance of the Early Years in laying a firm foundation for future learning and success. It is their vision to create a world-leading educational programme designed to nurture the potential in every child through its stimulating and developmental Early Years programme.

Drawing on over 150 years of heritage from Malvern College in the UK, MCPS believes its youngest children will develop their individual strengths through a personalised approach of active, play-based learning. The school seeks to foster life-long learning and to encourage each child's curiosity, kindness, resilience, self-awareness, open-mindedness, collaboration, risk-taking, independence, integrity, and humility. The Pre-School provides a secure, organised and innovative environment for children to engage in a balanced, holistic education programme. Combining creative, academic, sports and outdoor activities it also includes the successful 'Forest School' programme.

MCPS offers this extensive programme in the firm belief that children will be more than ready for a smooth

transition into full-time primary education. At MCPS, children learn through both a structured and a free-play programme which fosters inquiry, self-development and hands-on learning. Research has shown that this emphasis on active, play-based learning together with a balance of child-initiated and adult-led activities, develops skills, knowledge, and confidence that are not possible in a more formal classroom setting.

The educationally harnessed play programme builds on England's Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum, which sets expectations for each age and stage of a child's developmental progress. The programme encompasses the seven interconnected EYFS Areas of Learning and Development, namely



Communication and Language, Personal, Social and Emotional, Physical, Understand the World, Literacy, Mathematics, and Expressive Arts and Design.

MCPS welcomes and celebrates diversity within each child's unique background. They expect a portion of their pupils will be learning English as an additional language and therefore their experienced teachers are trained to ensure those children will acquire good standards in English. The Pre-School also has a team of dedicated Mandarin speaking teachers, as a prominent feature of their curriculum is to expose children from diverse cultural backgrounds to the Chinese language.

Malvern College's world-leading reputation consistently attracts the most qualified people to work for them. Recognising the importance of strong leadership, the Pre-School's team of experienced and passionate leaders possess the personal and professional skills to inspire excellence in all areas. Each classroom has a qualified native English-speaking Early Years teacher, who is supported by a full-time Mandarin-speaking teacher. All the Early Years staff are experienced, caring and dedicated practitioners who provide a supportive and stimulating learning environment where children feel not only safe but happy and therefore have the optimal opportunity to thrive and learn.

MCPS is one of the first schools in Hong Kong

to operate a 'Forest School' programme with Level 3 certified Forest School leaders. The school firmly believes that access to an outdoor environment is as important to a child's wellbeing and education as is a conventional kindergarten space. Children at MCPS will have regular access to this cutting-edge opportunity to extend their education beyond the confines of the classroom walls. This exposure to a myriad of exciting and challenging opportunities will enhance their everyday suburban life, and "round-off" their education in an enjoyable and fun way.

At MCPS the home-school partnership is truly valued and parents are recognised as a child's first teacher. The school's principal and its teachers will seek to develop this relationship by holding monthly sessions to offer insights to parents on topics including EYFS curriculum, Forest School, positive parenting, children's physical development, and many more.

MCPS believes that every child is precious and unique, ready to shine and to achieve their dreams. At MCPS, each child is greatness waiting to happen!

For further information, visit:
www.malvernpreschool.hk/

