

# 3

## Reclaiming Earthly Paradise: Froebelians and the Invention of Progressive Education

---

### Chapter Outline

|                                                                                     |    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Introduction                                                                        | 49 |
| Froebelians and England                                                             | 49 |
| Maria Montessori (1870–1952)                                                        | 52 |
| Progressivism, the State and Elementary Education in the early<br>twentieth century | 56 |
| Rachel and Margaret McMillan: welfare, education and care                           | 58 |
| Conclusion                                                                          | 62 |
| Further reading                                                                     | 63 |

# 3

## Reclaiming Earthly Paradise: Froebelians and the Invention of Progressive Education

---

### Reflection:

We are in an era in which we have grounds to be as concerned about the inequality between the opportunities available to the children of the rich and the poor as the Victorians who implemented Froebel's ideas in England. But can equality of opportunity be guaranteed without the active involvement of the State?

### Reflection:

Do you agree with Montessori that educational systems and curricula should be independent of the interpretation or abilities of individual teachers?

### Reflection:

What might the dual meaning of 'nursery' as a place for young children and also for raising plants suggest about the role that nature is presumed to have in effecting children's upbringing?

## Education and Constructions of Childhood

### **Reflection:**

Research the range of services provided by a Children's Centre near you. How many of the services that you identify were also provided by Rachel McMillan at her Open Air Nursery in Deptford?