

London Steiner School

British Values Statement

Context

British values are defined by the Department for Education as:

- Democracy
- The rule of law
- Individual liberty
- Mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs

Introduction

We are proud of our multi-ethnic London based community which provides rich and diverse experiences of different cultures for our children. We encourage sharing of different traditions and believe community is strengthened by diversity.

Our educational principles are designed to support every child to fulfil their unique destiny and to provide them with a firm foundation enabling them to develop into free, morally responsible, and integrated adults.

London Steiner School's (LSS) core values and ethos have at their heart the wellbeing of the whole child and the nurturing of their creativity in a culture of collaborative learning where every pupil is valued as a human being.

LSS encourages all children, regardless of ability, to find the joy in learning, to achieve success and excellence from strong foundations in a wide range of skills, to believe in themselves and to be motivated to succeed in their chosen path in life.

Preparing pupils for life in a culturally diverse society and showing, by example, the value of respect for each other is implicitly embedded in the curriculum and ethos of LSS, as it is within Steiner/Waldorf pedagogy (see appendix.)

Staff prioritise nurturing children by demonstrating empathetic and kind behaviour and language. They endeavour to develop secure, consistent, and responsive relationships with all pupils.

Staff reflect and challenge their own perceptions which, in turn, continually informs the curriculum and our approach to pedagogy enabling us to best support children (see pedagogical meeting policy).

Steiner/Waldorf pedagogy considers play an essential aspect of cultivating the social and emotional skills necessary to form healthy relationships informed by mutual respect and tolerance. Play forms a significant aspect of teaching in the kindergarten and the lower school.

Kindergarten

The young child's experience in a Steiner kindergarten is intended to lay the foundations for seeing the good in humanity, for a compassionate and tolerant outlook on life and for a strong sense of social responsibility.

LSS kindergarten attracts families from all walks of life and from all faiths. It provides a warm and unhurried learning environment where children have the opportunity to explore the world around them, learn how to interact with their peers, to listen and to express themselves. It provides the opportunity for natural scientific research and awe and wonder are encouraged.

Gratitude for the natural world, its gifts and bounty, respect for the human being (each other) in the way we interact and care for each other, ourselves, and the environment is learned through imitation of the adults around them. Tolerance of different faiths and beliefs is met through interaction with local communities and through the celebration of multicultural festivals.

Classes 1-8

Democracy: making decisions together

- Throughout the school, staff encourage children to see their role as an individual within a bigger social structure. Staff listen to children and encourage them to value each other's views. Turn-taking, sharing and collaboration is encouraged throughout the school.
- Children are given opportunities to develop enquiring minds in an atmosphere where questions are valued.
- Many aspects of the curriculum, for example: class plays, games, eurythmy lessons, choir and class music lessons, are particularly designed to encourage social integration.
- Class trips, are excellent opportunities for pupils to learn to balance their own needs and wishes with the needs and wishes of the group.
- In the middle school, pupils are encouraged to debate issues and experience decision making through a vote.

- The College of Teachers at LSS is itself a collaborative body who make democratic decisions together. This hands-on experience of the teachers, helps inform responses to children's experiences.

The rule of law: understanding that rules matter

- LSS Positive Behaviour Policy forms the backbone of expected behaviour. Expectations are explained to pupils on an ongoing basis in school assemblies. Through application of the policy pupils learn that there are consequences if rules are not followed.
- Staff may at times involve pupils with rulemaking to create rules and codes of behaviour that the children understand and take ownership of.
- Staff help children to understand their own and others' behaviour and its consequences, and to distinguish right from wrong.
- Games played in the playground are sometimes subject to rules set by adults but often the rules are developed by the children through negotiation with each other; this approach is encouraged.
- Children learn that rules are essential in sports and games, they learn to respect them and learn that without them, it is impossible to play.
- Stories told as part of the curriculum, in all classes, provide imaginative understanding of moral and social practice, good and evil, justice and redemption. (See curriculum below)

Individual liberty: freedom for all

LSS staff encourage a range of experiences that allow children to explore the language of feelings and responsibility, reflect on their differences and understand that everyone is free to have different opinions.

We encourage children to develop a positive sense of themselves. Staff provide opportunities for children to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and increase their confidence in their own abilities, for example:

- through encouraging them to take (risk assessed) appropriate risks e.g. tree climbing, fire lighting, using knives.
- by encouraging the development of their creative self-expression through music, drama, eurythmy, art and craft
- through talking about their experiences and learning through various forms of safe and constructive feedback.

- In class eight, the concepts of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity are discussed as part of learning about the French Revolution.

Mutual respect and tolerance: treat others as you would want to be treated

LSS promotes an ethos of inclusivity and tolerance where differing views, faiths, cultures, races and all protected characteristics (LSS promotes an ethos of inclusivity and tolerance where differing views, faiths, cultures, and races are valued and where children are encouraged to engage with the wider community) are valued and where children are encouraged to engage with the wider community.

Our aim is for children to:

- acquire a tolerance and appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures.
- experience and acknowledge similarities and differences between themselves and others, including all protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity.) and also among families, faiths, communities, cultures, and traditions.

This is enabled by:

- Sharing, discussing and appreciating different practices, celebrations, and experiences.
- being involved in acts of community service such as fundraising for outside charities, litter picking and carol singing at a local old people's home.
- celebrating festivals from different religions and traditions with help from parents of pupils with different faiths.
- learning foreign languages and experiencing different cultures; all students learn two foreign languages from class one. The curriculum includes learning about cultural aspects.
- the study of geography (see curriculum below)
- staff encouraging, demonstrating and explaining the importance of tolerant behaviours such as sharing and respecting other's opinions
- staff promoting diverse attitudes and challenging stereotypes, for example, sharing stories that reflect and value the diversity of children's experiences and providing resources and activities that challenge gender, cultural and racial stereotyping

British values within the curriculum

Steiner/Waldorf pedagogy is built upon imparting moral values and tolerance. Within LSS curriculum, in addition to practises mentioned above, the following provides an insight into topics taught or methods used in each class.

Kindergarten	Learning tolerance through play Morals in stories
Class One	Learning tolerance through play Morals in stories Where necessary, pedagogical stories addressing a behaviour
Class Two	Learning tolerance through play Morals in stories Where necessary, pedagogical stories addressing particular behaviours
Class Three	Old Testament and Judaism and the morals inherent in the stories The Ten Commandments Where necessary, pedagogical stories addressing particular behaviours
Class Four	Pagan religions Norse mythology and consequences of not following rules.
Class Five	Ancient cultures and religions and the discussion of life and death The birth of democracy - Ancient Greece Geography of the British Isles – Different cultures within the British Isles.
Class Six	The birth of Christianity and acceptance juxtaposed to The Roman Empire Roman Law Debating European Geography and an appreciation for different cultures associated with different history, climates and landscapes.
Class Seven	The birth of Islam, comparative religion, and discussion of traditions The Reformation The Conquistadors and discussion around the implications of conquering a race or nation The Magna Carta and its implications for democracy
Class Eight	The Interrelationships of religions Biographies – overcoming difficulties The French Revolution – Liberty, Equality, Fraternity and what they mean. Modern and recent history including the electoral system and votes for women. Current Events and our place in them. World Geography and an appreciation for different cultures throughout the world.

Appendix

The following is a relevant excerpt from The Educational Tasks and Content of The Steiner Waldorf Curriculum by Martyn Rawson.

'Citizenship is based on enabling children and young people to cultivate three important qualities; the powers of critical judgement, cosmopolitan citizenship and narrative empathy. The capability to form ethical judgements as free individuals means the ability to act consciously and responsibly out of insight. Cosmopolitanism is the ability of people of different cultural backgrounds to live in mutual respect and tolerance in peace with each other.

Narrative empathy is the ability to experience the world from the perspective of the Other Person – to be literally able to tell the other person's story and make sense of it. Of course it also means that a person has self-knowledge and feels secure in herself to be open to others without losing herself. Nussbaum and Nobel Prize winner Amartya Sen have developed what they call the human capabilities and development approach (Nussbaum, 2011), which maps out the basic conditions for people to develop the capabilities they need to actively contribute to social progress.

Waldorf education seeks to provide a practical pedagogical context for realizing such aims. There is widespread consensus among scholars (du Bois-Reymond 2009), that the most important skill young people actually need today is the ability to navigate new economies and fragmented social life. That means, they can construct stable and coherent identities across difference life situations in a rapidly changing social context. In order to navigate, one needs to be able to locate oneself in the world in relation to self, others and the world. It means that one has meaningful goals and knows how to set about achieving them.

This does not only mean self-management (many problems in today's economies are caused by people whose primary goal is managing themselves at the cost of others), it also means being able to engage with other people in a constructive, mutually respectful way.'⁽¹⁾

Ref: Rawson M. 2016: The Educational Tasks and Content of the Steiner Waldorf Curriculum

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