



## **CURRICULUM GUIDELINES FOR 6-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN IN THE FINAL YEAR OF KINDERGARTEN**

Steiner kindergartens include a broad age range, and children remain within the 'kindergarten phase' (the first phase of childhood) until they are rising 7.

The curriculum for their last year in kindergarten is the preparation for the class years in a Steiner school. It also takes account of the National Curriculum for this age group and is differentiated from the curriculum for the younger children.

Previously modelled behaviour is now expected, the children receive new responsibilities, opportunities and privileges, and the teachers support the emergence of thinking skills. The teacher adopts a different approach with the rising 6-year olds, which relies more on direct instruction and less on imitation. By means of this curriculum, skills are embedded in order to facilitate a gentle transition to the formal learning stage which we believe takes place in the child's 7<sup>th</sup> year.

## ENGLISH (Reading, Writing, Spoken Language & Listening)

### *Listening/Responding/Turn-taking/Social Awareness*

#### **The children learn to:**

- Listen and respond appropriately to adults and peers
- Gain, maintain and monitor the interest of the listener(s)
- Maintain attention and participate actively in collaborative conversations, staying on topic and initiating and responding to comments
- Consider and evaluate different viewpoints, attending to and building on the contributions of others

#### **How they learn:**

- Teachers expect respectful listening and turn-taking in conversation, modelling this and intervening to support it if necessary
- Dialogue between children and between children and adults becomes more equal and balanced
- More complex role play games, construction projects, and more challenging practical tasks are often sustained over several days and involve negotiation, joint planning, staying on task and seeing the other's viewpoint.
- Teachers build social awareness by encouraging sharing of information, feelings, and two-way humour
- Teachers expect children to be more able to resolve conflicts independently.
- Children develop social dialogue and turn-taking skills in co-operative physical play
- Children learn to concentrate and memorise through hearing long, complex stories and ring-times

#### **Learning Opportunities:**

- On arrival/greetings/farewells
- Snack-time conversations

- Sharing time
- Free play
- Ring-time
- Story-time
- Discussion of work and 6-year-old projects
- Seasonal activities/festival preparation
- Co-operative physical games e.g. skipping, bean-bag games

### ***Language Development***

#### **The children learn to:**

- Speak audibly and fluently with an increasing command of Standard English
- Build vocabulary
- Articulate and justify answers, arguments, and opinions
- Give well-structured descriptions, explanations and narratives for different purposes, including for expressing feelings
- Participate in discussions, performances and role play
- Use spoken language to develop understanding through speculation, hypothesising, imagining, and exploring ideas

#### **How they learn:**

- More complex language and wider vocabulary modelled by adults
- More specific terminology used during practical activities
- Teachers respond to children's comments to encourage them to develop and evaluate their observations, explore ideas, and think for

themselves

- Teachers encourage children to use more precise vocabulary and sentence structures to describe experiences and objects and to clarify their thinking
- Adults take a more questioning approach when responding to children, in order to support the child to reflect, and/or provide alternative suggestions
- Longer and more complex stories and ring-times
- Different songs, rhymes, stories, and vocabulary used in Tuesday group for older children
- Teachers expect children to negotiate verbally in play and to try to resolve conflicts independently
- Children take on roles in spontaneous story-telling and puppet shows, or in a play or presentation which develops out of a story told by a teacher or a eurythmy session; teachers model appropriate narrative.
- Teachers model subtlety, flexibility, and fun of language through word play, jokes etc.

**Learning Opportunities:**

- Discussion of work and projects
- Experiential learning opportunities in domestic work, garden activities, expeditions, seasonal activities, and preparation for celebrations
- Story time
- Ring time
- Sharing time
- Snack time conversation
- Eurythmy sessions

- Role play (planning, negotiation, conflict resolution, narrative)
- Independent story-telling and puppet shows
- Taking on a role in a play
- Explaining domestic or creative activities to younger children and helping them

### **Literacy**

#### **The children learn to:**

- Build foundations for literacy to prepare for later literacy work in the class years
- Draw and write spontaneously in their 'Special Books'
- Hold crayons and pencils, using correct pencil grip
- Ask teachers how to write words to use in play or celebrations etc.
- Throw/catch a beanbag
- Have good posture when sitting at the table

#### **How they learn:**

- Drawing and writing in 6-year-old 'Special Books'
- 6-year olds have access to coloured pencils to develop pencil grip
- Teachers write things for children to use or copy in play, if requested (e.g. shop signs)
- Handwork, craft and woodwork projects and throwing/catching games develop dexterity, hand-eye coordination and strength in hand, arm and shoulder (needed for later writing)
- Phonic awareness developed (initial sounds, rhythm, rhyme, assonance, alliteration, and sequencing of sounds) through songs, verses, stories and movement accompanied by speech sounds

- Looking at picture-books and beginning to understand that the text relates to the pictures; using their knowledge of how stories are structured to help tell stories based on the pictures

**Learning Opportunities:**

- 6-year-old 'Special Books'
- Daily opportunities for mark-making, drawing and emergent writing with different materials (crayons, pencils, chalk, paint, sand, clay, wax etc.)
- 6-year-old projects (e.g. sewing, weaving, book making, woodwork) and other handwork (e.g. clay modelling, beeswax modelling, finger-knitting, gardening)
- Spontaneous use of writing in free play
- Picture-books always available
- Bean-bag games for Wednesday group for older children
- Ring-time and eurythmy sessions

## MATHEMATICS (Numbers; Shapes, space, and measurement)

### *Numbers*

#### **The children learn to:**

- Count orally to 20 and beyond
- Identify one more and one less of a given number
- Begin to understand multiplication and division by grouping and sharing small quantities
- Join in with number rhymes and/or games involving addition/subtraction
- Use language of more/fewer/less/more than/less than/most/least

#### **How they learn:**

- Teachers model counting in naturally arising contexts
- Counting games and songs
- Older children and staff encourage each other to count, compare quantities, multiply and divide (share)
- 6-year olds take an active part and are more independent in tasks involving mathematical concepts (e.g. number, quantity, fractions, sequencing, spatial awareness)
- More complex games, construction work and role play involving quantities, shape recognition, numbers, time, concepts of more and less, addition, subtraction, and geometry
- Children experience and talk about shapes, size, weight, number and simple fractions in domestic and craft activities and garden work

#### **Learning Opportunities:**

- Daily routines such as laying the table for snack, serving food, tidy-up time, getting ready for the garden and other transitions

- 6-year olds have special responsibilities and privileges e.g. putting out the right number of chairs, cups, plates, carrying out inventory of shelter contents
- Daily opportunities for games, songs, and rhymes at ring-time plus weekly eurythmy sessions
- Daily free play indoors and outside, including role play of shopping, using money, cafes, bus journeys, post office etc.
- Daily domestic activities (e.g. baking, cooking, cleaning, mending), involving weighing, filling tins, estimating quantities, adding, and taking away, multiplying, dividing, or folding into halves and quarters, looking at shapes
- Craft activities for 6-year-old projects and festivals – size, shape, number, geometry, measuring

### ***Shape, Space and Measurement***

#### **The children learn to:**

- Recognise and use words and/or shapes of 'half' and 'quarter'
- Recognise and use language of long/short, longer/shorter, taller/shorter
- Recognise and use language of heavy/light, heavier/lighter than
- Recognize and use language of full/empty, half, more than
- Recognise and use language of quick, quicker, slow, slower, early, earlier
- Recognise and use language of days, weeks, months, years
- Be aware of the role of money in everyday life
- Recognise geometry and different shapes

#### **How they learn:**

- Teachers demonstrate and use the language of fractions, weighing, measuring, estimating, filling, emptying, and sequencing as part of domestic and craft activities, gardening, and outdoor activities. Teachers also use the language of comparison in these contexts



- Children experience and talk about shapes, size, weight, number and simple fractions in domestic and craft activities and garden work, and compare quantities, speed, size etc.
- More complex games, construction work and role play involving quantities, shape recognition, spatial awareness, numbers, weight, time, concepts of more and less, addition, subtraction, sequencing, and geometry
- Teachers use more complex concepts of time and draw on children's memory of previous or recurring events and ability to anticipate
- Children experience folding, sorting, sequencing, and putting things away in the right place
- Children learn about using money in role play
- Children move in rhythmical and geometrical ways and experience quick/slow, tall/short etc and the accompanying vocabulary as they move to verses and songs
- Children learn about past and present, times of day and seasons through stories, puppet shows and ring-times; they also explore these concepts in their free play

#### **Learning Opportunities:**

- Daily domestic, craft and outdoor activities alongside adults
- Daily role play, physical play and construction play indoors and out
- Daily ring-time and story; weekly eurythmy sessions
- Daily routines such as laying the table for snack and tidy-up time
- 6-year-old projects

## SCIENCE (Working Scientifically; Plants, Animals and Humans; Everyday Materials; Seasonal changes)

### *Working Scientifically*

#### **The children learn to:**

- Observe scientifically

#### **How they learn:**

- Children are encouraged to make careful, close observations
- Children make predictions, test out theories and evaluate results in naturally arising contexts

#### **Learning Opportunities:**

- Extensive daily indoor and outdoor free play, especially play with open-ended natural materials and construction play e.g. making an irrigation system of pipes from the water butt to the flower beds
- Daily domestic/garden activities (e.g. grinding grain to make flour, watching dough rise, baking the bread)
- Seasonal activities (e.g. making apple juice, making dried apple rings, planting bulbs, making butter by hand)

### *Plants, Animals and Humans*

#### **The children learn to:**

- Recognise plants and animals
- Name some plants and animals, where they live, how they move and grow
- Show care and empathy towards humans, animals, and our environment

#### **How they learn:**

- The teachers model for the children care and empathy towards each other, animals, plants, and our environment

- 6-year olds learn empathy through helping to care for younger children
- Children observe insects, animals, birds, plants, and trees first-hand out of doors – in the school garden, on walks in local common
- Observe closely small creatures in the garden – worms, snails, ladybirds as well as birds and other wildlife on walks.
- Children learn to care for their environment by growing, preparing and making their own food, composting, tidying and cleaning the rooms and garden, and mending broken toys
- Stories, ring-times, eurythmy and seasonal festivals help children feel connected to nature and the environment

#### **Learning Opportunities:**

- Ongoing – the teacher always strives to model this behaviour for the children
- 6-year olds are given special tasks and responsibilities, e.g. to help dress a younger child, show them how something works or to look after a child who has hurt herself
- Daily domestic and gardening activities – planting and harvesting, making bird feeders in winter etc.
- Plenty of time spent in nature: extensive daily periods of outdoor play and activities; regular walks and expeditions in local common  
Pond dipping at Agnes Riley Gardens
- Nature-based stories, ring-times, eurythmy and festivals, when children learn about, sing about and move like plants and animals

#### ***Everyday Materials***

#### **The children learn to:**

- Recognise and use a variety of materials
- Use simple, manual equipment

#### **How they learn:**

- Children experience and use a wide variety of materials – paint, chalk, sand, wood, wool, stones, shells, silk, cotton, beeswax, clay, dried lavender, paper, metal, china, earthenware, cork etc.
- Children have regular opportunities to use real manual tools e.g. table knives, scissors, needles, saws, chisels, rakes, spades, wool carders etc.
- Children use simple, hand-driven technology to make and do things – apple press, butter churn, grain mill, weaving frame, etc., which helps them to understand process and mechanics

**Learning Opportunities:**

- Daily free play using a wide variety of materials
- Daily domestic and artistic/craft activities (painting, washing, cooking, cleaning, mending, gardening etc.)
- Seasonal activities (e.g. making apple juice) and preparing for festivals
- 6-year-old projects (sewing, felting, woodwork, clay pots, weaving etc.)

***Seasonal changes***

**The children learn to:**

- Experience all kinds of weather
- Experience the four seasons

**How they learn:**

- Children spend at least a quarter of the session outdoors, all year round. In this way they become aware of weather, temperature, seasons, festivals and appropriate clothing
- Children learn about the natural world on regular walks. Following the same route at different times of year demonstrates seasonal changes

- Children relate to the different types of weather and seasons through seasonally based stories, ring-times, and festivals
- Understanding and memory for seasonal changes are developed through recurring seasonal activities and festival celebrations

**Learning Opportunities:**

- Daily 'garden time' in all weathers.
- Seasonal activities (apple-pressing, seed-planting, harvesting, butter-making, candle-dipping, making birdfeeders etc.)
- Indoor and outdoor seasonal festivals
- Regular walks and expeditions for the older children (Tuesday group)
- Stories, puppet shows and ring-times

## UNDERSTANDING THE WORLD (Design and Technology, Cooking and Nutrition, Geography, History)

### *Design and Technology*

#### **The children learn to:**

- Design
- Make and evaluate
- Build structures
- Use real manual tools
- Explore safety, stability etc.

#### **How they learn:**

- In play, children have plenty of opportunities to be imaginative, build structures, set up plays/puppet shows, build train/car tracks, construct obstacle courses etc.
- In their play the children experiment, build, evaluate, knock down and build again, improving parts that were unstable/unsafe before
- Children design and make by sewing, cutting, modelling, drawing, painting, clay work and woodwork.
- Children have regular opportunities to use real manual tools e.g. table knives, scissors, needles, saws, chisels, rakes, spades, wool carders etc. They use them under supervision and learn how to use them safely.
- Children use simple, hand-driven technology to make and do things – apple press, butter churn, grain mill, weaving frame, washing mangle
- In their play, children show awareness of and explore the technology used in contemporary living (mobile phones, computers etc)

#### **Learning Opportunities:**

- Child-led free play indoors and out, especially construction play, building imaginative landscapes for small world play and puppet shows, and creating layouts for vehicles
- 6-year-old projects; other handwork and crafts; painting, drawing, and modelling
- Daily domestic and gardening activities
- Seasonal activities

### ***Cooking and Nutrition***

#### **The children learn to:**

- Become aware of healthy diet
- Prepare food for sharing with the group

#### **How they learn:**

- Children bring in fruit and vegetables to share with the group. They take part in the daily preparation and cooking of the food we share in kindergarten, and experience and talk about a healthy diet and wholesome food
- Children experience hands-on processes such as grinding grain, kneading dough, and seeing it go into the oven, or feeling the cream turn into butter as it is churned; helping them to understand where their food comes from and how the processes of cooking work

#### **Learning Opportunities:**

- Daily preparation of snack
- Snack-time
- Domestic activities: grinding flour, kneading, baking, making crumble, chopping vegetables for soup, churning butter, making apple juice etc.
- Cooking for celebrations and festivals

## ***Geography and History***

### **The children learn to:**

- Identify seasonal/daily weather patterns
- Recognise physical features of the local environment including hill, stream, pond, reservoir, meadow, orchard, road
- Recognise physical features of the wider world including sea, beach, cliff, coast, forest, mountain, river, desert, island
- Recognise human features including city, village, factory, farm, house, office, harbour, shop etc.
- Be aware of the past, using common words and phrases relating to the past
- Appreciate that others may use different languages

### **How they learn:**

- Children spend at least a quarter of the session outdoors, all year round. In this way they become aware of the local area, weather, temperature, seasons, festivals, and appropriate clothing.
- Children learn about the natural world on regular walks. Following the same route at different times of year demonstrates seasonal changes
- Children relate to the different types of weather and seasons through seasonally based stories, ring-times and festivals
- Understanding and memory for seasonal changes are developed through recurring seasonal activities and festival celebrations
- Stories, puppet shows and ring-times bring knowledge about past and present, people from far and near, living in huts or castles, village or city, working on a farm or in a shop etc., and give children the vocabulary to talk about the past
- In ring-time and eurythmy, children are supported to experience left/right, up/down, near/far
- Seasonal and/or multicultural festivals provide learning, understanding and experiences of different seasons, cultures, countries, individuals' backgrounds etc.



**Learning Opportunities:**

- Daily outdoor play and outdoor activities
- Regular walks in the local environment including mornings spent at local parks and commons
- Picture books showing physical features of the wider world
- Story-time, puppet shows, ring-time and eurythmy
- Seasonal festivals
- Children sometimes hear songs and rhymes in different languages
- Children hear other children using different languages in Kindergarten – this is encouraged and celebrated e.g. Counting children in home language

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT (Moving and Handling, Health and Self-Care)

### *Moving and Handling*

#### **The children learn to:**

- Move freely, using their whole body
- Jump
- Throw and catch
- Participate in games
- Participate in dances
- Develop fine motor skills to support later literacy

#### **How they learn:**

- Extensive opportunities to move and become confident in a range of ways, practising both small and large motor skills, coordination, agility, balance and cooperation.
- At ring-time and eurythmy, children engage in varied large and small movements, including dancing, marching, tiptoeing, jumping, crouching, stretching, rocking, crossing arms and legs etc. and also throwing and catching in bean-bag games and exercises
- Free play involves lifting and moving things, building, climbing, sliding, balancing, cooperation etc. Physical play is promoted by the provision of planks, logs, stools, stepping stones, ladders, rocking equipment etc.
- In outdoor play and garden activities, children experience running, climbing, skipping, jumping, playing games, digging, lifting, and carrying, using tools, pushing barrows, raking etc.
- Children's fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination are developed through cutting with scissors, chopping food, finger-knitting, plaiting,

knotting, sewing, using tools, felting, weaving, folding, winding etc.

- 6-year olds have access to coloured pencils to develop pencil grip

**Learning Opportunities:**

- Free play indoors daily
- Extensive time in the garden daily
- Regular walks and outings
- Daily domestic work, e.g. cooking, setting the table, moving chairs, clearing up
- Daily ring-time and weekly eurythmy
- Garden work
- Daily drawing time
- Six-year-old projects

***Health and Self-Care***

**The children learn to:**

- Develop stamina and fitness
- Eat healthily
- Develop resilience and emotional well-being
- Develop independence and self-esteem

**How they learn:**

- Through extensive time spent in physical activity and play both indoors and out the children become stronger and fitter

- Teachers encourage children not to give up too easily and to master appropriate challenges for themselves; appropriate risk-taking is allowed and supported
- Snacks are healthy and children help to prepare them, giving them a greater connection to the food
- Children have repeated opportunities to try things out in an emotionally supportive context (e.g. throwing and catching games, learning how to sew)
- Children are expected to take on practical self-care tasks for themselves e.g. serving food, clearing the table, tidying the room, dressing for the garden, washing hands etc.

**Learning Opportunities:**

- Indoor and outdoor free play daily; regular walks in nature
- Food preparation and snack-time
- Daily domestic and self-care routines
- Games and exercises in the Tuesday group
- 6-year olds have special responsibilities and privileges (laying the table, serving food, putting things away in the cupboards, taking messages to other members of staff etc.)

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (PSHE)

### *Health and Wellbeing; Relationships and Living in the wider World*

#### **The children learn to:**

- Have a healthy lifestyle
- Keep physically and emotionally healthy
- Develop healthy personal boundaries and self-regulation
- Respect others and the environment
- How to respond to an emergency – always follow the teachers' instructions
- Develop and maintain healthy relationships within a range of social/cultural contexts
- The rising 6-year old children are expected to take on responsible roles within the classroom and to model positive behaviour for the younger children

#### **How they learn:**

- Daily, healthy prepared and shared meals
- Children are taught to wash hands after using the toilet, before food (preparing and eating)
- To plant, grow and harvest food in the garden
- Children learn to dress appropriately according to the weather and season
- Children are physically active indoors and outdoors in play and work activity
- Adults model respectful and healthy attitudes towards oneself and each other
- Adults support children to recognise and express their emotions and to recognise other peoples' feelings

- Adults suggest simple strategies for managing feelings
- Adults have differentiated expectations of this age group according to ability to deal with challenging situations
- Children learn to follow the teacher's lead in an emergency
- Children experience a social setting including families from any different cultural backgrounds
- Children prepare for and experience celebrations e.g. birthdays and festivals.
- Children are encouraged to assert themselves appropriately and learn how to say NO if they feel uncomfortable and to respect others wishes and personal boundaries

**Learning Opportunities:**

- Food preparation and snack time
- Handwashing and toilet routines
- Gardening
- Regular walks in the local area
- Free play, teacher-led activities
- Fire drills and evacuation procedures
- Seasonal festivals
- Families participations in school events and celebrations
- Families are invited to share their own cultural celebrations

**EXPRESSIVE ARTS (Exploring and using a range of materials, drawing, painting, and sculpture; being imaginative and creative; music, eurythmy and crafts)**

**The children learn to:**

- Use a range of materials creatively
- Draw to express their experiences and out of imagination
- Paint to express their experiences and out of imagination
- Sculpture in clay, wood, sand, and wax
- Design of different project in different materials (textiles, felt, wool, wood, clay)
- Singing
- Poems and rhymes
- Use/make/listen to instruments

**How they learn:**

- Children experience and use a wide variety of materials – paint, chalk, sand, wood, wool, stones, shells, silk, cotton, beeswax, clay, dried lavender, paper, metal, china, earthenware, cork etc.
- In play, children have plenty of opportunities to be imaginative, build structures, set up plays/puppet shows, build train/car tracks, construct obstacle courses etc.
- Children design and make by sewing, cutting, modelling, drawing, painting, clay work and woodwork.
- In free play indoors and out children create their own musical instruments using pots, pans, buckets, spades, pieces of wood, stones etc.
- The children also use ready-made musical instruments freely and spontaneously
- Children join in songs, poems and rhymes and sometimes create their own

- Children dance spontaneously and ask others to join them

**Learning Opportunities:**

- Daily free play indoors and out
- Daily ring-time
- Weekly eurythmy
- Daily story-time
- Daily garden time
- Daily drawing
- Weekly painting
- Seasonal crafts