

London Steiner School

Curriculum Policy - Part 2

General Principles of the Education Offered

This policy, along with the Pupil Assessment Policy forms part of the London Steiner School Curriculum Framework.

There are 3 parts to this policy:

Part 1: Introduction to pedagogical practice

Part 2: General principles of the education offered

Part 3: Schemes of Work

Part 2 outlines how our curriculum is informed by the Steiner/Waldorf understanding and experience of child development through the different classes/ages.

1. Legislation and Guidance

- [Independent Schools' Standards Parts 1 and 2](#)

2. Overview

- The Steiner/Waldorf curriculum puts a priority on the relationship of the learning material to the human being.
- Subjects are purposely set in inter-disciplinary contexts wherever possible.
- Subject matter is taught through a phenomenological or experiential methodology – i.e. from observation of, and personal involvement with phenomena, leading to a concept (inductive), rather than from presentation or description of the concept, to confirmation of examples of that concept (deductive). This educational approach is generally more time-consuming for teachers; however, it is also a great source of inspiration for them in working to facilitate the emergence of healthy young human beings. Human beings who are conscious of their own uniqueness, their own skills and abilities and who have a healthy orientation to the world they are moving into.

3. Kindergarten Summary

In the Steiner Early Years approach, we provide time and space for the natural, unforced development of key skills as a basis for literacy, numeracy, and social and emotional competence. A warm and secure learning environment is created where the qualities of childhood are nurtured.

The age of children in the Kindergarten ranges from approximately 3¼- 6½ years. The Kindergarten uses the EYFS and the Steiner-Waldorf Curriculum Framework.

4. Lower School Summary

Once children join class one, they have a class teacher who will generally stay with them right through to the end of class eight. The first part of each day is spent in 'main lesson', weaving together physical, rhythmic, musical, practical and artistic activities with oral and written work. Main lessons are taught in subject blocks of three or four weeks around a curriculum topic, such as literacy, numeracy, geography, history or science.

Lower school pupils also have subject lessons: French and German, music, handwork, modelling/art/craft/painting, handwork, games, form drawing, religion, eurythmy and later, woodwork and drama.

5. Child Development & The Curriculum Through The School

Kindergarten - ages 3/4/5

We follow the **Early Years Foundation Stage Framework** delivering the learning and development requirements for our 3-5-year-old children through our Steiner/Waldorf Early Childhood Curriculum. We deliver the seven areas of learning and development in order that children may attain all their early learning goals (ELGs). We have been granted exemptions and modifications in some areas of the educational programs and the assessment arrangements, in order to preserve the integrity of the Steiner Waldorf Curriculum and practice. (Please see list of Exemptions and modifications)

Kindergarten – age 5/6

By the time they are 5 years old, children attend kindergarten five mornings a week.

The curriculum works with physical co-ordination and integration, social and emotional relationships, imagination, 'what ifs' (scientific enquiry) and creativity. Structured activities are designed to continue the support of their development and to extend their learning and skills. Work is differentiated to take account of their individual needs and interests (including those with an EHCP or who are identified as having SEN).

Tasks and focus are extended as independence, confidence and resilience continue to be developed. As the children become more physically aware of their environment they are encouraged to extend their own learning through exploration and discovery. This

together with the developmental tasks engaged with lead the children to become more articulate, self-regulating, empathetic and resilient.

During their final year:

- they begin to have more responsibility
- each child works on longer handwork projects in preparation for class one
- and (on Fridays) more challenging activities are included such as movement games and skipping.

Furthermore, as the children approach this age their play changes to become increasingly more language based. This development is supported with appropriate activities and stories.

Transition to class one demands certain skills and readiness for a curriculum of formal learning. In order to ascertain the readiness of each child to access the more demanding class one curriculum, we assess for maturity of movement, speech, drawing skills, social and emotional development, physical health and development.

The class one readiness checklist (see separate document) is made use of throughout the year to inform the activities planned to provide an appropriate level and range of challenges in both movement and project work suitable for the 5/6-year-old child throughout their final year in kindergarten. We also increasingly work on child led letter/word recognition and numbers.

Class 1 - age 6/7

Building on the good habits inherited from kindergarten the class one curriculum forms a framework for the children to find their place within lower school, working with their new teacher and their peers and preparing to share a new journey of learning. Learning continues to be developed with a light touch, through rhythmic and visual games and activities.

The teacher continues the work of the kindergarten teacher by introducing concepts through pictures and stories. The class one child still lives in a timeless world. The stories are based on fairytales and nature stories which are rich in content and feed the imagination and feeling life of the young child. The numbers are explored for their sense of quality as well as quantity and the four processes are linked to real life events, often to do with nature.

Following an initial main lesson block on form drawing, numeracy and literacy alternate throughout the whole of the first year. The child then 'sleeps' on what they have learnt before coming back to continue and deepen their learning. Most subjects are taught by the class teacher at this stage, but in our small school, the class will also have the experience of other teachers for some of the subject lessons.

Summary of Class 1 main lesson blocks: Form drawing, numeracy, literacy

Class 2 - age 7/8

The breathing rhythm of the main lesson (which commences in class 1) supports the continuing development of good habits, gross and fine motor skills, life skills and social

skills. Life and social skills are enhanced through fables and saint stories.

The story content moves on to fables, stories of the saints and legends all with an emphasis on human relationships and morals. Nature stories and walks continue as an observational and experiential introduction to science. Children also continue to learn through counting games and activities, they move on to place value and odd and even numbers. A solid foundation on which to build deeper numeracy skills. Is established. Through this approach to literacy and numeracy the class two children continue to develop an enthusiasm and love for learning as well as ensuring that academic learning goals are well embedded into the process.

Summary of themes for Class 2 main lesson blocks: Form drawing, Numeracy, Literacy

Class 3 - age 8/9

By the age of nine, some children are beginning a 'prepuberty' we call the Rubicon. This can be an unsettling time with questions of 'who am I?' and 'where do I fit in?' These questions mirror many of the questions of the peoples of The Old Testament. The Ten Commandments and tales from the Old Testament not only provide rich context from a classic text but provide the child with the picture of a greater authority and a feeling for external standards which relate to moral laws. Farming, trades, crafts building and measuring are also engaged with at this age. Not only do these topics form a large part of the framework for the Old Testament stories, but also, at a time when children begin to look further out into the world, these topics encourage the child to discover and relate, in a more structured, practical way, to the world around them.

Class three children have significantly more capacity for larger quantities and longer periods of work. Children of this age are developing an emergent strong memory which teachers develop and work with by providing longer stories with more challenging moral content, longer poems to memorise, consciously thought through rhythmic movement and regular practices of the four processes of numeracy.

Summary of typical themes for Class 3 main lesson blocks: Alternating numeracy and literacy with the themes mentioned above.

Class 4 - age 9/10

The curriculum moves from the external power of the One God of The Old Testament with the associated earthly authorities of the Prophet and King, through to the competing gods of Norse mythology. This movement within the curriculum entails moving from the certainty of what is right and wrong - exemplified in the God of the Old Testament, towards the questioning of authority that is a recurrent theme in Norse mythology.

This conflict and questioning of authority supports the inner development of the child, who now, fully prepubescent, is taking more notice of the different authorities in their own life. Working through the rich, vibrant and opulent content of the Norse Myths, allows for a multi-faceted view of being within the world. The underlying principle offered is that there are many different ways to look at the world.

In numeracy, with the introduction of fractions, there is a continuation of the theme of breaking apart the whole into parts (like the one God to many gods).

The curriculum provides a sense of order to balance the growing confrontation with disorder; form drawing is no longer free, but becomes very rule-based and rigorous, based on Celtic knotwork and interweave.

Wider perspectives are introduced through a local History/Geography main lesson block, encouraging the children to look at the world beyond school and the home environment. Wider perspective is also gained through the Man & Animal main lesson block. The archetypal characteristics of animals are studied, and the students ask the questions: 'What are the differences?' and 'How do the animals correspond to the Human Being?'

Summary of typical themes for Class 4 main lesson blocks: Literacy (Norse Myths), Numeracy(fractions), Science (Man & Animal), Local history/geography,

Class 5 - age10/11

In class five, we often perceive a wonderful harmony in the child. There is a brief respite. The 'realisation' questions associated with prepuberty have become assimilated and the onset of puberty proper is yet to emerge. There is a finer balance within the emotions at this age (the calm before the storm) and the limbs and body of the child are often, also, strikingly in harmony (compared with the awkwardness of puberty). Class five is the middle of childhood, with a strong emphasis on beauty and transformation.

Literacy moves from the mythological stories of muddy, murky, trickster type characters such as Loki and finishing with the final battle of Ragnarok in Norse myth, to a new beginning with the voyage of Manu, the sinking of Atlantis and the beginning of the study of Indian mythology. Thus the ancient cultures of India, Persia and Egypt, with the associated developments of humanity, are studied, right through to Greek mythology. The children, inspired by the stories of the trials and tribulations overcome in the Greek myths, join together in the summer term for a true celebration of the strength and beauty of humanity through a three-day training and final re-enactment of the original Greek Olympics.

In mathematics, fractions continue to be explored alongside decimals. The laws and language of mathematics reflect the complexity of the different cultures studied and yet a framework becomes evident.

The awe, beauty, harmony and transformation that are the themes of this age are reflected in the study of Botany and the awe, beauty, harmony and transformation of the plant kingdom together with its relationship to the insect world.

Class five ends with a preview of what is to come: a movement from Greek mythology to Greek History; the beginnings of democracy and the conquests of Alexander the Great.

Summary of typical themes for Class 5 main lesson blocks: Literacy (Ancient mythology), Botany, Free hand geometry, mathematics, UK geography.

CLASS 6 - age11/12

In class six, some children begin to move into puberty with its associated loss of balance and harmony. This move into puberty is addressed by studying the ups and downs of Roman History; the huge advancement in building technology and the epic journey from the rule of kings, through democracy to the final dictatorships.

The physical changes of puberty are accompanied by the beginnings of a loss of naivety. The emergent challenge to authority is matched with the regimentation of the Romans. The children experience the Romans' determination to conquer the world, but they learn this is only possible through laws, discipline and by following rules. Debating is introduced to allow the children to present and defend particular views (often black and white), thus helping them find forms for their own growing opinions and to help make sense of their world. Light and shade feature in art.

Along with the emergent challenge to authority the children also experience a metamorphosis of their inner world; forces emerge within that are not easy for them to understand. Roman history provides an outward form and structure, boundaries that provide a quality of reassurance. The romance and emotional quality of Ovid's tales of metamorphosis reflect their inner struggles and help them to identify with a bigger picture.

The physical changes include a hardening of the muscles, a lengthening of the limbs and an accompanying downward pull to the earth (children of this age are often to be found with their heads resting on their desks). The hardening aspect is reflected in the building technology of the Romans but also in the study of geology, the hard material matter which makes up the earth. There is, however, a complementary tendency to look up, and astronomy is engaged with (from an Earth-centered pre-Renaissance perspective). The experience of changing inner and outer forces means now is the time to begin physics, exploring the forces and phenomena that operate in the world.

In mathematics, the children study economics in a block on the history of money and business maths, showing how another kind of order has been brought to the world. In geometry, the precision of the compass is introduced.

In games lessons, physical challenges and sports skills are introduced. These require the children to start using their muscles to move their heavier bodies; an inner is required. The Olympic disciplines in class five focused on personal challenges, now in class six competition, teamwork and good sportsmanship are also introduced.

Summary of typical themes for Class 6 main lesson blocks: English (Roman history), Mathematics, Geometry, Geology, Physics, Astronomy.

Class 7 - age12/13

The curriculum moves from the Roman Empire, built on the foundation of strong armies and structures, towards the study of its fall, due in part to the very beginnings of Christianity, providing an antithesis to extreme form and structure, and based on love. The tension between these two conflicting gestures sets the tone for the history and themes of the Class seven curriculum.

In class six there was an up and down gesture. In class seven, there is an outward gesture. The thirteen-year-old begins to look out and about at the wider world: they start to realise they are part of a much bigger world, one to be explored. They have questions, including questions of authority.

Their creativity is stimulated by a willingness and curiosity to know more. This is reflected by studying the rise of Islam, and the wonderful achievements of the Arabs including Algebra in mathematics. (Geometry is the study of Pythagoras). The feudal system in Europe provides a stark contrast and the Crusades link many of the themes together. The rich history curriculum leads to the Magna Carta and eventually to the Renaissance and The Age of Discovery. Biographical, and geographical study of the impact European explorers had on indigenous peoples, allows pupils to look at different cultures and different cultural perspectives. Underlying these studies are themes of how to 'be' without dominating, but instead accepting, others.

Adolescents have a tendency to be interested in themselves. This is a good time for them to learn about their bodies in relation to the world. The in depth 'health and nutrition' block addresses nutrition, relationships, sex, alcohol, drugs and mental health.

Medieval history is accompanied by the study of chemistry and its basis in alchemy, and the Renaissance means astrology can now be looked at from a sun-centric model. The phenomena of physics are taken further.

Thirteen-year-olds are finding their voice and this is well supported In English with a dedicated main lesson block on creative writing called Wish, Wonder and Surprise. The pupils are encouraged to genuinely express their feelings and ideas. In art, pupils will now be asked to observe and make comment on works of art and along with the Renaissance, in art classes, pupils will learn perspective drawing.

The P.E. curriculum is built upon from class six. It is further developed, to take account of the need to go out into the world and explore, by out-door pursuits activities.

Summary of typical themes for Class 7 main lesson blocks: History/ancient literature, Mathematics, Geometry, Physics, Chemistry, biology (health), Creative writing.

Class 8 - age13/14

The majority of pupils are now in adolescence; they see the world differently and their bodies are different. In small bursts, there is a waking of their intellect and a change in perspective. They begin to take more notice of the social environment and the cultural influence of the world. They begin to harbor a belief they can do something to change the world. The topics of The Renaissance, give way to the beginnings of the age of Revolution. The pupils are now finding their own voice and beginning to see how knowledge makes one capable of forming appropriate judgements from which further questions arise.

The American Revolution shows how change can be brought about leading to more independence and a personal sense of responsibility (self-governance). The French Revolution and the Enlightenment provide discussions around liberty, Equality and

Fraternity. They also provide an insight into a Revolution that can bring about change, but not necessarily the change that was wanted.

The Industrial revolution and the wider consequences of it – poverty, pollution and the era of capitalism, are an important aspect for appreciating the development of modern society and can springboard into interesting discussions on the parallels of the current technological revolution. The Russian Revolution, communism and the events that led up to the First World War, all provide rich ground for exploring different points of view and perspectives.

To further support pupils' developmental and educational progress, teachers create opportunities for observation of the world from different perspectives. In English different writing styles can be explored for example; epic, descriptive, lyric or dramatic. These styles offer contrasts and allow pupils to 'try on' different emotions. A major feature of class eight is the 'Class 8 Play', staged in a professional theatre. Recent news stories also form material for discussion.

The theme of looking up and out is extended in class eight to an appreciation of other cultures around the world in a study of World Geography. Geography, may also include a study of the rhythm and order of weather systems, together with their inherent unpredictability. This finds a resonance with the inner chaos of their own emotions.

Study of the platonic solids is the basis of class eight geometry and gives form to unpredictability. Mathematics includes the exploration of patterns, particularly the Fibonacci Sequence and its relationship to so many aspects of nature. Irrational numbers challenge thought processes and number bases can be taught as a function of computer programming.

Science includes the teaching of mechanics, a phenomenon made good use of in the Industrial Revolution and pairs elegantly with the study of the muscles and bones in Biology. The heart and circulation are taught both biologically and poetically as are the nuance of the senses.

Trips form an important part of the curriculum throughout the school however in line with relating as many elements of the curriculum as possible to the modern world, and to support their stepping out from the school into the world, the class eight curriculum involves many trips to museums, art galleries, local projects, industries etc. There is also a final trip with the class together involving some culture and some adventure; this is often abroad.

As well as a major theatre production and a trip abroad, the pupils new-found independence and self-expression lends itself to a piece of self-chosen, self-directed research which climaxes in a final presentation to a whole school audience. It includes a piece of art-work or something they have made, and documentation of the process.

P.E. continues to challenge the pupils' physicality, with competitive sports and outdoor pursuits. Participation, inclusivity and good sportsmanship are important elements at a time when pupils can be very self-conscious.

Summary of typical themes for Class 8 main lesson blocks: History (Revolutions), Physics (mechanics), Biology (Anatomy), Maths (patterns and irrational numbers)

Geometry (Platonic solids)' English (poetry, short story, civil rights movement), Geography, Drama (class 8 play) , Project.

Notes on combined classes

Very often classes are combined. This makes for a bigger social group. Depending on the teacher and the class, either the curriculum of the younger class is taught until Christmas, the new curriculum beginning in January, or, the teacher may teach elements of both curriculums simultaneously. Sometimes in the older classes the two years maybe split for certain blocks.

Combining classes 1 and 2

During the autumn term the teacher revisits the class 1 curriculum, bringing it for the first time to the younger children while at the same time ensuring that the older children, through recall, are deepening and consolidating their learning and skills as well as introducing new stories and activities.

For example, in a literacy main lesson, the younger children would work on an alphabet book containing capital letters while the older children would now focus on lower case letters. In a numeracy main lesson, the older children might teach the younger ones a game such as clock patience, and in doing so consolidate their own skills, as well as developing an increased sense of responsibility.

The class two curriculum is started in the spring term. Class one content continues to be blended with the class two curriculum. In this term the fables of the class two curriculum begin to replace the fairytales of the class one and kindergarten curriculums. Class one content e.g. learning new letters, continues to be taught to the younger children through stories, but after Christmas, using fables to do so rather than fairytales.

The curriculum for the younger children joining a combined class, however, has already been supported by the summer term curriculum within kindergarten which prepares the younger group through the telling of additional fairytales, ensuring their social and life skills are nurtured appropriately.

The class one/two teacher continues the work of the kindergarten teacher by introducing concepts through pictures and stories in order to develop an imaginative connection to the content. The story content moves from fairytales through fables and stories of the saints. Nature stories and walks continue as an observational and experiential introduction to science. Children also continue to learn the quality of numbers through counting games and activities, they move on to place value and odd and even numbers. A solid foundation on which to build deeper numeracy skills. Is established. Through this approach to literacy and numeracy the class one/two children continue to develop an enthusiasm and love for learning as well as ensuring that academic learning goals are well embedded into the process.

The Combined final year of class 7/8

The class eight curriculum is very rich with plenty of material to choose from and scope for a huge variety of experiences. The older pupils will finish the curriculum this year.

The younger pupils, if there are enough of them, may choose to stay in the school for another year to further explore and develop the themes, deepen their understanding and hone their skills. It also gives them a chance to be the oldest children in the school and take the responsibility that incurs.

Related Policies

LSS Curriculum Policies parts 1 and 2
LSS Pupil Assessment Policy
LSS Marking and Feedback Policy
LSS SEND Policy
LSS Inclusion and Equality Policy
LSS British Values Statement

LSS RSE Policy
LSS Online Safety Statement

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