

Norwich Steiner School

Curriculum Policy

February 2017

Introduction

Norwich Steiner School follows the Steiner Waldorf curriculum, as outlined in the publication edited by Avison & Rawson: "The Tasks and Content of the Steiner Waldorf Curriculum". Norwich Steiner School requires all teachers to use this text as a standard reference text for lesson planning.

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

Norwich Steiner School operates a two-year age group combined class system and has used this curriculum policy to:

- Outline our understanding and experience of child development in combined classes through the different ages; and
- Describe how we work with child development through use of the curriculum.

General Principles of the Education Offered

Kindergarten

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; and a warm and secure learning environment is created where the qualities of childhood are nurtured.

Children enter the kindergarten between the ages of approximately 3¼- 6½ years. **The Framework of Kindergarten Education policy** provides a description of the curriculum for this entire age group.

Kindergarten 3 -5 year olds

We also follow the **Early Years Foundation Stage Framework** delivering the learning and development requirements for our 3-5 year olds through our Steiner Waldorf Early Childhood Curriculum. We deliver the 7 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. (SEE SEPARATE LIST OF EXEMPTIONS AND MODIFICATIONS).

Kindergarten 5 -6 year olds

During their final year in kindergarten the 5 and 6 year olds will start to have more responsibility and will each work on longer handwork projects in preparation for class one. By the time they are 5 they are attending five mornings a week and on Fridays activities include more challenging activities such as movement games and skipping.

The curriculum for the 5 and 6 year olds in kindergarten is differentiated, with planned, structured activities designed to continue to support their development and to extend their learning and skills, taking into account their individual needs and interests (including those with an EHCP or who are identified as having SEN).

We work with physical co-ordination and integration, social and emotional relationships, imagination and what ifs (scientific enquiry) and creativity.

Tasks and focus are extended, independence, confidence and resilience continues to be developed as the children become physically aware and grounded, extend their own learning through exploration and discovery, become more articulate and self-regulating, empathetic and resilient.

As they reach this age their play changes and becomes more language based. This is taken into account in planning and supported with appropriate activities and stories.

Transition to class 1 demands certain skills and readiness for a curriculum of formal learning. In order to ascertain the readiness of a child we assess maturity of movement, speech, drawing skills, social and emotional development, physical health and development. We consider what a child needs to be able to do in order to fully access the curriculum in class 1.

We use the class one readiness checklist throughout the sun child year to assess school readiness (see separate document), assess physical maturity through movement games, and provide a more challenging range of project work suitable for the 5 and 6 year old child throughout their final year.

We also hold a dedicated transition group afternoon once a week in the summer term where children moving into Class 1 stretch and consolidate their practical and social skills, and form a distinctive group within the kindergarten.

The graduation to class 1 child at the end of the summer term is marked by a special ceremony including a puppet show devised by the children.

Lower School

Once children join Lower school they have a class teacher who will generally stay with them right through to the end of class 7/8. 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 three-week subject blocks around a curriculum topic, such as literacy, numeracy, geography or history.

Lower school pupils also have subject lessons: French and German (taught initially through games, songs and poems), music, violin, drama, art, painting, handwork, modelling (with clay or beeswax), or form drawing, and later gardening, woodwork, games, religion and science.

Upper school

The Main Lesson structure continues, but in upper school the single teacher holding the class, is replaced by a group of specialist teachers. In upper school, pupils specialize in one, rather than 2 languages, and subject lesson structures change. So instead of having, for example, one afternoon of handwork a week for the whole year, one of woodwork and one of art, classes may have textiles lessons three afternoons a week for one term, woodwork in the next term and art in the last.

Upper school pupils also benefit from a range of visiting and peripatetic teachers who bring skills such as basket-making, photography and dance to the school, as well as different teachers for each main lesson block.

In the final two years of the upper school, pupils start to choose specialisms and may drop certain subjects and pick up others.

Child Development & the Curriculum through the School

Class 1

Class 1 content is based on fairytales and nature stories, which are rich in content and feed the imagination and feeling life of the young child.

Building on the good habits brought from kindergarten, the class 1 curriculum forms a framework for the children to find their place with their teachers and peers.

Main lesson blocks of numeracy and literacy, which run through the whole of the first year, are taught in alternation with one another, allowing the child to 'sleep' on what they have learnt before coming back to continue to deepen their learning. Other subjects such as art and handwork, are taught mainly by the class teacher at this stage, but the class will also have the experience of one or two other teachers for specialist subjects such as languages.

Combined class adjustments - Throughout the year, teachers gently prepare the class to share a new journey of learning and pave the way for welcoming the younger children who combine with this group the following year. There is an emphasis on this in the last term, when the kindergarten children who will form the new class 1 join the existing class 1 for activities including stories, skipping and counting, so preparing for the inter-weaving of the two ages in September. The existing class 1 look forward to welcoming their new peers and have responsibility with the teacher for absorbing and assisting the younger group.

Summary of typical themes for Class 1 main lesson blocks: Form drawing, numeracy (four processes), literacy (nature, fairy stories)

Class 1/2

In literacy the teacher continues to introduce concepts through pictures and stories in order to develop an imaginative connection to the content, and fables are now used alongside fairytales. In numeracy, children get a feel for the quality of number through counting games and activities, and through experiencing number in this way build a foundation from which to extend numeracy skills.

By the end of class 2 these approaches to literacy and numeracy help foster an enthusiasm and love for learning as well as establishing academic fundamentals.

Combined class adjustments - During the autumn term, the teacher revisits the class 1 curriculum, which is based around fairytales and nature stories, using different stories to the previous year, thus bringing new content for all children. In the spring term, the class moves onto the class 2 curriculum, where literacy is based around fables, with the class 1 content being brought through the class 2 curriculum.

So for example, literacy for class 2 is based around fables instead of fairytales, but from this, all children in the class might work on an alphabet book with the younger children being introduced to capital letters, and the older children the lower case letters. The older children thereby consolidate their learning and the younger children learn both upper and lower case letters at the same time.

In numeracy, class two may teach class one children a game like clock patience, in doing so deepening their own skills, making their abilities visible to the teacher, and in helping the younger child, have the opportunity to develop their sense of responsibility.

Summary of typical themes for Class 1/2 main lesson blocks: Form drawing, numeracy (maths games, four processes), literacy (Russian fairy stories, fables and saint stories) and nature stories.

Class 2/3

Class 2/3 starts the year with the fables and saint stories, and ends with the authority of the 10 commandments and various tales from the Old Testament, particularly Genesis. As well as providing rich content for literacy work, the curriculum supports the developing child. At the beginning of the year the children's inner understanding of right and wrong is supported through the moral content of fables and saint stories. Introduction in the Spring term of Old Testament stories, provides a contrasting richness of content with strong and fixed moral laws, such as the 10 commandments, as by the end of class 2/3, children also have the feeling for external standards which relate to moral laws.

Class 2/3 children have 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, long poems to memorise, stories with more challenging moral content, consciously thought through rhythmic movement and regular practices of the 4 processes of numeracy.

Summary of typical themes for Class 2/3 main lesson blocks: Alternating numeracy (four processes, complex sums, long division and multiplication) and literacy, with the themes of time, farming, measurement, old testament, building, trades & occupations.

Class 3/4

The curriculum moves from the external power of the one God of the Old Testament, through the earthly authorities of the Prophet and the King, right through to the competing gods of Norse mythology. This movement within the curriculum entails moving away from one God to many gods, from the certainty of what is right and wrong exemplified in the god of the Old Testament towards the questioning of authority that is present in Norse myth. This conflict and questioning of authority supports the inner development of the child, who is at this stage starting, perhaps for the first time, to question the authority of those around him/her. Working through the rich, vibrant and opulent content of curriculum allows for a multi-faceted look at things, with the underlying principle being 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).

Within the curriculum there is order to balance 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 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, where by studying the archetypal characteristics of animals, the students can look to see how they correspond to different aspects of the human being, but also as to how they are different and separate as well.

Summary of typical themes for Class 3/4 main lesson blocks: Old testament, Man & Animal, local geography, building, Norse myths, maths (fractions)

Class 4/5

Class 4/5 is, in many ways, the movement toward the heart of childhood and harmony.

In autumn term the class 4 curriculum continues with Norse myths, ending with the Twilight of the gods at the final battle of Ragnarok while class 5 in the spring term inaugurates a new beginning with the voyage of Manu, the sinking of Atlantis and the beginning of the study of Indian mythology.

Class 5 is the middle of childhood, with a strong emphasis on beauty and transformation. Children study the world around them in many different ways. Literacy moves from the mythological stories of muddy, murky trickster type characters such as Loki in Norse myth, through to Greek mythology and the celebration of the beauty of humanity through a re-enactment of the original Greek Olympics.

Botany starts with studies of the mushroom and fungi in the autumn, through to studies of the flower in the summer. Metamorphosis of the caterpillar to the cocoon to the butterfly are all studied in class 4/5. The common theme of the year is transformation and beauty, harmony and the Olympic ideal.

Summary of typical themes for Class 4/5 main lesson blocks: Botany, Norse myths, Geometry, numeracy, Indian mythology, UK geography, Persia, Greek mythology

CLASS 5/6

In class 5/6, children are starting to move into puberty, with its associated loss of balance and harmony. This move into puberty is mirrored in the curriculum through the progression from mythology to Roman history via Alexander the Great and the romance and emotional quality of Ovid's tales of metamorphosis. With the onset of puberty, children experience a metamorphosis of their inner world, with forces emerging within that are not easy for them to understand.

There is a hardening of the body through the development of muscles and a loss of naivety which starts to occur. The emergent challenge to authority of this age group 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 in class 5/6 to allow the children to present and defend particular views, thus helping them find forms for their own growing opinions and to help make sense of their world.

In maths, the children make a study of economics in a block on business maths, showing how another kind of order has been brought to the world.

The botany studies in the class 5 curriculum is botany and the analysis of the delicacy of the flower, give way in class 6 to studies of geology, and the hard material matter which makes up the earth.

In games lessons, physical challenges are introduced which require the children to start using their muscles to move their heavier bodies; timed runs are also introduced for the first time; both activities help to bring inner discipline.

Summary of typical themes for Class 5/6 main lesson blocks: Botany, Norse myths, Astronomy, numeracy (percentages, economics, geometric drawings), Indian mythology, UK geography, Persia, Greek mythology

Class 6/7

In class 6 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 rising of a new movement based on love. The tension between these two conflicting gestures sets the tone for the history and themes of the Class 7 curriculum.

This is mirrored socially in that in class 6 pupils want to conquer their social environment by being more powerful than one another, but by class 7 they start realising that they are part of a much bigger world, that they are more than themselves. They move into a place of being more accepting of one another's idiosyncrasies, faults and virtues. There is a drop in the level of social antagonism and there is a brief developmental period where the children get the opportunity to experience a sense of peace.

Pupils start to work with their own independence and display a willingness and curiosity to know more. It is the age of discovery and geography that includes studies of Columbus and other archetypal explorer figures. In English studies, pupils engage in genuinely creative writing for the first time, because they are developing something to say. In art, pupils will now be asked to observe and make comment on works of art. The need to explore and go out into the world is met in the games curriculum by activities such as orienteering.

Summary of typical themes for Class 6/7 main lesson blocks: Roman history, physics (acoustics, optics), numeracy (business maths, algebra & geometry), Fall of Rome, Chemistry (combustion), European and Middle East Geography, History (the Crusades), Botany, Norse myths, Indian, Persian and Greek mythology, UK geography, biology (senses & health) and medieval history.

Class 7/8

The theme of class 7 is the Age of Discovery, moving through the Renaissance period and on to the beginning of Revolutions. The transformation which is occurring in the curriculum matches the transformation taking place in the class.

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 as they look on the world in a different way in their changing bodies, there is a change in perspective. They notice the social environment and the cultural influence of the world a lot more than previously. They are less willing to accept the world, but have a belief that they can do something to change the world.

In art classes or as a main lesson block, and linked to the Renaissance, pupils do perspective drawings.

The American Revolution is studied as rich content for how change can be brought about, leading to more independence and a personal sense of responsibility (self governance). Around this time, pupils are asked to complete a class 8 project, their first independent project and the pupils are encouraged to be more self-governing as the teacher steps back more to allow space for pupils to be independent, both socially and in

their work. The Class 7/8 curriculum also covers the French Revolution to see the contrast of how a Revolution can also bring about change, but not necessarily the change that was wanted....

In the games curriculum, this is the time to introduce activities such as solo sailing, whereby pupils learn to take personal responsibility for learning to sail and control it.

Summary of typical themes for Class 7/8 main lesson blocks: Perspective drawing, Platonic solids, Age of Discovery, American & French Revolutions, Physics (electricity), Chemistry (food substances & digestion), Biology (Anatomy), Maths (algebra, Pythagoras Theorem, pi and circles, percentages, ratios).

Class 8/9

In Class 8/9 the pupils are starting to look at and question the outside world and starting to 'play' with it, taking different perspectives, trying on different emotions, testing out this new emergent faculty that comes with puberty and adulthood.

The history curriculum in class 8/9 carries over from lower school with a continuation of the studies of revolutions, usually with emphasis on the Industrial revolution and the wider consequences of it – poverty, pollution and the era of capitalism for example. This leads on to further studies of the Russian revolution, communism and the events that led up to the first world war.

In lower school, there was a focus mostly on European history and geography, whereas in Upper school the student's viewpoint slowly broadens out to incorporate more global issues.

Biographical studies of Ghandi and Desmond Tutu for example can offer students a deeper understanding of such issues, and provide examples of subtler revolutions that perhaps question the west and propose alternative ways of being.

Another biographical, and geographical study is that of Captain Cook and the impact European explorers had on indigenous people, allows the students to look at different cultures and different cultural perspectives. Underlying these studies are themes of how to 'be' without dominating, but instead accepting, others.

In geography, a study of the rhythm and order of weather systems, and yet their inherent unpredictability, finds a resonance with the inner chaos of their own emotions.

In written work, pupils are being asked to evidence their writing...."If you're going to say something, say why you think that..."

Summary of typical themes for Class 8/9 main lesson blocks: English (poetry, short story, civil rights movement), textiles, science, drama, maths (pattern in number), history of art, history (French & Industrial revolutions) and photography.

Class 9/10

The rich and colourful curriculum of class 9 continues into the first term of the academic year. After Christmas there is a transformation into the black and white of polarities that form the basis of the class 10 curriculum.

At this age, pupils are forming strong opinions and they start to see the world in very black and white terms. They see parents as good or bad, teachers as right or wrong, and make judgments that are often based upon an emotional response or on what they have heard other adults that they look up to say. They may also be heard exploring, often fantastical ideas about what they want to become in the future - an astronaut, a sniper, a brain surgeon.....Emotionally, the pupils are also in a place of polarity, being either very 'up' or 'down'.

At this point, the curriculum takes a step right way back to the birth of consciousness and the dawning of humanity, to a time before things were written down or recorded. Everything they have 'dreamed through' in lower school right from fairy tales and fables, to the revolutions of modern history, they now go back in time and 'think through'.

In geography, the world is looked at in a very solid physical way, by going into the earth's inner core, looking right through at its layers and the movement of the surface layers and the resultant earthquakes and volcanoes.

Summary of typical themes for Class 9/10 main lesson blocks: English (Dickens, literature from other cultures, tragedy to comedy) Social Science (alternative contemporary cultures, e.g. Brazil), Human biology, Physics (mechanics), Chemistry, History of Drama, History of Art, History (the Enlightenment following the Renaissance and industrial revolution), Geology (formation of the earth), earth processes, Maths (bodmas, probability, Pascals triangle, binomial coefficients, algebra, logarithms and exponentials).

Class 10/11

By the end of class 10 and moving into class 11, whilst still quite subjective and not able to make independent judgments, the emerging adults are not so reactionary as previously and are less emotive. They are starting to develop intellect and the ability to reason; their inner life is beginning to develop as they are becoming increasingly able to look at themselves and move towards a greater level of objectivity and self knowledge.

In English the students study Chaucer, where many of the tales illustrate the fact that cleverness does not necessarily mean intelligence, or that self and social knowledge are not found by intellectual understanding alone.

At this stage, most pupils in the school will enrol to study for the SSC, which at Level 1 offers a full and broad learning outcomes based on the Steiner Waldorf curriculum. The SSC is structured so that there are no opt-out choices for pupils in Level 1.

Summary of typical themes for Class 10/11 main lesson blocks: business maths, biology, physics (mechanics), social science, English (Chaucer & Odyssey), Trigonometry and Surveying, History of Art, Ecology.

Class 11/12

At this stage, the young adults are starting to develop a deep inner life as well as a maturing intellect. In support of this, the underlying themes for class 11 and 12 are about morality and thinking....the development of an understanding that whilst it's all very well to be clever, there has to be a thread of morality coming through in order to be of service to others.

The classic Main Lesson text for this year group is that of Parzifal, whereby the knight learns through a long journey (a search for the Grail) that it's not enough to know *what* to do, that you have to be informed by *feeling* and then be prepared to make a *decision*: "*What is the right thing for me to do?*"

In the Bothmer movement curriculum for example, the Walk in Symmetry is a physical expression of how we need to walk through life acknowledging the different points of view, in search of a path that is straight and true.

Summary of typical themes for Class 11/12 main lesson blocks: English (Parzifal, romantic poetry, persuasive speech, creative writing), Social sciences (Anthropology, Middle East politics), Biology (plants & cell biology), Ecology, Physics (waves, light, heat, electricity and magnetism), Chemistry (elements, substances structure, atomic theory), Maths (Geometry, statistics, calculus, algebra, trigonometry), practical art & craft, and drama.

Class 12/13

In their final year of school, everything starts to come together. There is a noticeable integration of the pupils' learning journey as they start to be able to make independent and objective judgments. They start to ask questions: *"What's my task in the world? What is my path?"*

Although in the final year of school, pupils use their developing judgment and make choices about what skills and subjects they wish to specialise in, there are a number of compulsory areas of study. These 'core' subjects help to ensure ongoing social cohesion within the class, as well as bringing a sense of conclusion to their school-based education. Examples of this include main lesson blocks such as a study of Human biological evolution, current political affairs, philosophy and architecture. Pupils also engage on a Class 12 project of their choice, which can range in depth and breadth according to individual interest, from producing a cookery book, to crafting a musical instrument, or writing an extended research essay on a topic of interest.

Throughout the year, a range of visiting and inspirational speakers are invited to share with the students different pathways that they may choose: charity workers from Africa, those who have set up small businesses, MP's, those working in social care, those with experience of apprenticeships.

Summary of typical themes for Class 12/13 main lesson blocks: Human Biological evolution, projective geometry, Architecture, Philosophy, Modern History (fall of the Berlin wall, communism), English (Shakespeare, poetry, short story analysis, extended essay on a chosen theme, portfolio of creative writing), Mathematics (differential & integral calculus, algebra, trigonometry, statistics), physics (mechanics, waves, atomics), practical art, soft & hard craft and drama.

This policy belongs to Norwich Steiner School, which is the operational name for the Charity the Norfolk Initiative Steiner School, registered charity number 1099377, company number 4815492