

Norwich Steiner School

Curriculum Policy

Revised April 2023

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 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, the school aims to teach subject matter 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 in a combined class 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 3½- 6½ years. **The Framework of Kindergarten Education policy** provides a description of the curriculum for this entire age group.

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-to-four-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, 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 and the structure of some subject lessons change. So instead of having, for example, one afternoon of handwork a week for the whole year and one of woodwork, classes may have textiles lessons two afternoons a week for one term and woodwork in the next term, thus allowing a sense of immersion.

Upper school pupils also benefit from visiting and peripatetic teachers who bring skills such as basket-making, surveying and projective geometry, as well as experiencing different teachers for each main lesson block.

In the final year of the upper school, all pupils engage in the process of completing a substantial project and choose a minimum of three subject specialisms to study in depth.

Child Development & the Curriculum through the School

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 start to have more responsibility and each works 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 continue 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 is 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 increasingly work on letter/word recognition and numbers. On Fridays, when the children aged 5+ join us, we also ask them to do a recall ring time and a recall story based upon what they have learnt over the previous week. We also often have lower school language teachers joining us for a short session on this day.

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.

Class 1

Building on the good habits inherited from kindergarten, the Class 1 curriculum forms a framework for the children to find their place within lower school, working with their new teacher and their peers, preparing to begin a new journey of learning, and paving the way for combining class one and two the following year.

Learning across all subjects continues to be brought artistically, as well as through many and varied rhythmic activities. However, in Class 1, and throughout lower school, subjects such as Science and Geography are worked with in some depth, through an experiential rather than a didactic approach.

The Class 1 curriculum derives much of its content from fairytales and nature stories, drawing on, as well as developing the children's imagination as the class begins to approach the exciting new challenges of reading and writing.

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, music and handwork are taught mainly by the class teacher at this stage, though the class may also have the benefit of a specialist handwork teacher, for instance, as well as native speakers for foreign languages.

Combined class adjustments - Throughout the year, teachers gently prepare the class to share a new journey of learning in paving 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

The breathing rhythm of the main lesson (which commences in class 1) supports the continuing development of good habits, gross and fine motor skills plus practical skills such as how to hold a pencil. Life skills and social skills are enhanced through fables and saint stories.

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, Class 1 children might work on the assimilation of the written alphabet as they move towards an understanding of basic phonics, while the older children may concurrently be engaged in some alliterative writing activities based on the particular letters that their younger peers are learning about. There is much scope here for useful partner work, as well as opportunities for the Class 2 children to revisit aspects of literacy that they may still find difficult.

Similarly, in a numeracy main lesson, the older children might teach the younger ones a card game such as clock patience, and in doing so consolidate their own skills, as well as developing an increased sense of responsibility.

The class 2 curriculum is generally introduced in the spring term (this timing of bringing the older class's content is usually employed throughout lower school) though Class 1 content continues to be blended with the class 2 curriculum. In this term the fables of the class 2 curriculum begin to replace the fairytales of the class 1 and kindergarten curricula. Class 1 content, e.g. learning new letters, continues to be taught to the younger children through the use of stories, but after Christmas, using fables to do so rather than fairytales.

Children also continue to learn the quality of numbers through counting games and activities. This provides a solid foundation on which to build deeper numeracy skills. Through this approach to literacy and numeracy the class 1/2 children will continue to develop an enthusiasm and love for learning as well as ensuring that academic learning goals are well established.

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 comedy of fables and the moral aspiration shown by the stories of the saints, and ends by drawing on various tales from Hebrew Scriptures, particularly the Book of Genesis, that meet the child's growing sense of leaving behind the relative innocence that they have so far known through kindergarten up until now, as they begin to ask more searching questions of their teachers and parents. For example, the story of Adam and Eve, and their expulsion from Eden, or the story of Abraham and Isaac and his near sacrifice by his father address moral questions – right and wrong, justice, etc. that are becoming more pressing for the children at this stage of their development. Such narratives also provide rich content for imaginative work in literacy.

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 the recitation and memorizing of longer poems, stories with more challenging moral content, consciously thought through rhythmic movement and regular practices, in various forms, 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 narratives central to this stage of the curriculum move from the external power of the one God of the Hebrew scriptures, 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 departing from the certainty of what is right and wrong towards the questioning of authority exemplified by the trickster god Loki, for example. 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 the world that the child is living in, with the underlying principle being that there are many different ways to make sense of it.

In numeracy, with the introduction of fractions, there is a related continuation of the theme of breaking apart the whole into parts (the one God to many gods) while across the curriculum there is plenty of rigour to balance this new multiplicity; form drawing is no longer free, but becomes rule-based and more formal, based on Hiberno-Saxon 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. Insight into the human condition 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, while studying how specialized animals can be – in contrast to humanity's more generalized skills and practices.

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 sees the movement of the class toward the relatively harmonious heart of childhood, as the challenges of adolescence approach in the coming years.

In the Autumn term, the class 4 curriculum continues with the study and enacting of Norse myths, ending with the Twilight of the gods at the final battle of Ragnarok, while the beginning of Class 5 content in the Spring term inaugurates a new beginning with creation stories drawn from middle-eastern mythology, such as the voyage of Manu, the sinking of Atlantis as well as working with stories drawn from Indian mythology.

Class 5 can be seen as the middle of childhood, with a strong emphasis on narratives of journey and transformational encounter (Orpheus and Eurydice, The 12 Labours of Herakles). Such stories help to address the changes that the class will soon be going through, if not already experiencing. Literacy moves from the stories of not to be trusted, trickster type gods and characters, through to the heroes and heroines of Greek mythology and, in the summer term, the celebration of the beauty and striving of humanity through participation with other Steiner schools in a re-enactment of the original Greek Olympics.

By this time, the class will be working in much greater detail with the stories that the teacher brings. Their creative retelling of the various narratives will incorporate a greater awareness of grammar, more descriptive and colourful use of language, and a deeper identification between the tribulations of the characters in the stories with the children's own experience.

Coinciding with the various changes that are imminent in the children during this time, and providing a different, scientific perspective on them, is the beginning of the study of Botany – beginning by the collecting and artistic analysis of locally found 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.

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, with many within the class now moving into puberty, the curriculum also mirrors such change as it progresses from Greek mythology to Roman history via Alexander the Great, though more fantastic tales continue to be looked at, though with a Roman slant, in Ovid's Metamorphoses. Such narratives, whether historical or mythic, help the children as they experience the onset of puberty, as they undergo, as well as outer changes, metamorphosis of their inner world, with forces emerging within that are not always 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 undertake an introductory 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 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 may exhibit a wish to conquer their social environment by being more powerful than one another, but by class 7 they start realizing that they are part of a much bigger world, - one that needs subtleties of engagement that require compromise, listening to the other

and acceptance of different opinions and ways of life. Ideally, they are helped to move into a place of being more accepting of one another's idiosyncrasies, faults and virtues with a concurrent lessening in the level of social antagonism, providing an all too brief developmental period where the children get the opportunity to experience a sense of peace.

Pupils start to work with their own developing independence and display a willingness and curiosity to know more about how the world has come to be how it is. It is the age of discovery and geography that includes studies of Columbus and other archetypal explorer figures, including the ambivalent legacies and wounds that such figures have wrought. In English studies, pupils engage in genuinely creative writing for the first time, now that they are genuinely 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

Following on from the study of exploration and colonization, the Class 7/8 curriculum now moves through the Renaissance period – including the new sense of perspective which this age brought - and on to the stirrings of the impulse towards Revolution. The transformation which is occurring in the curriculum matches the increased perspective – and revolutionary spirit – that is now evident 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 incisive intellect and as they look on the world in a different way from their changing bodies, there is a concomitant change in perspective. They notice the social environment and the cultural influence of the world more deeply than previously. They are less willing to accept the world, but have a belief that they can do something to change it.

The American and/or French Revolutions are studied as rich content for how change can be brought about, - though the children are led to see that the change that occurs might not be that which was wanted... 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.

In the games curriculum, this is the time to introduce activities such as solo sailing, (when possible) whereby pupils learn to take personal responsibility for learning to sail and to control their own vessel and orientation.

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

The pupils of class 8/9 are fully into adolescence – they are 'baby adults'. They often seem to be in the midst of psychological upheaval, which is disorientating and somehow off-balance. Their inner life becomes increasingly introspective and self-centred, needing refocusing or objective orientation from the adults

around them. During adolescence children are developing powers of independent judgement, striving towards truth, becoming more analytical and starting to take a more self-determined approach to learning.

In summary they are:

- Finding their own voice
- Beginning to see how knowledge makes one capable of forming appropriate judgements
- Learning how forming judgements leads to new questions.

To support these developmental and educational needs, teachers create opportunities through the curriculum for observing from contrasting angles and different perspectives. For example in English, different styles e.g. epic, descriptive, lyric, dramatic can be used to create different perspectives and to 'try on' different emotions. Recordings of news, podcasts and real world examples may also be brought.

The history curriculum, with 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, all of which provide rich ground for exploring different points of view and perspectives.

Biographical, and geographical study 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.

Geometry in the maths curriculum includes "Patterns in number" which helps the students develop their own insights into geometry and geometrical proofs. Quadratic equations and measurements and calculations of surface and volumes provide good practice in formal, logical thinking.

In Biology, pupils go from learning about the human skeleton, muscular system and sense organs, to looking much further into the shape and function of the bones.

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), inventions in physics (steam, calculator, electricity) and photography.

Class 9/10

The rich and colourful curriculum of class 9 gradually transforms to incorporate the 'polarities' that form the basis of the class 10 curriculum.

At this age, pupils are developing their powers of independent judgement but their 'thinking' and 'feeling' worlds continue to be separated. This often results in opinions being formed with no foundation and they tend to see the world in very 'black and white' terms. Pupils of this age 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 explore ideas and dreams about possible futures for themselves - an astronaut, a brain surgeon.....Emotionally, the pupils are also themselves in a place of polarity, being either very 'up' or 'down'.

The educational focus shifts to supporting the development of self-discipline, tenacity, organisation, taking responsibility for one's actions and accepting the consequences of one's behaviour. Students of this age welcome clarity of explanation, kindness from adults and humour.

The curriculum reaches 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 for example, 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, conic sections).

Class 10/11

Class 10/11 pupils come into the year seeking insight – they want to know how we know what we know, and how facts relate to them personally. They experience their ego strongly, often applying harsh judgements of sympathy or antipathy, and they continue to question adults. There is often a sense of imprisonment or of a deep pain to be endured, setting in place a threshold to be negotiated and crossed. If done so successfully it can be truly transformative. Finding balance between their inner and outer life is key.

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.

Key learning objectives for this age group includes pupils beginning to develop the following skills:

- Achieve objectivity and clarity in thinking
- Draw conclusions logically and causally
- Be able to form common sense judgements
- Formulate concepts (e.g. trigonometry)
- Work with accuracy and apply what they have learned (e.g. Surveying)
- Take increasing responsibility for their own work and behaviour
- Form opinions, explain and justify them (e.g. point of view essays in English)

To support these objectives, pupils in class 10/11 typically study modern history and develop an understanding of the forces that have shaped (and continue to shape) Europe and the world that we live in. This includes aspects such as nationalism, industrialisation, capitalism, communism, socialism...and how these can and have manifested in war. From exploring the experiences of both the perpetrators and the victims, helps students to work with understanding (and sympathy) and in the development of an ability to empathise with those caught in war.

At this stage in the school, most pupils in the school will enrol to study for the New Zealand Certificate of Steiner Education (NZCSE), which at Level 1 offers a full and broad learning outcomes based on the Steiner Waldorf curriculum. The NZCSE is structured so that pupils are expected to engage in the full breadth of the curriculum. The only subject pupils may opt-out of at level 1, are the Modern Foreign Languages.

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

Class 11/12

Students of Class 11/12, as young adults start to develop a deep inner life as well as a maturing intellect. They attempt to synthesise their own insights with what they see in the outside world. They are challenged to find their own way, to make decisions and to consider the full consequences of their actions. 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?"*

These themes of morality, decision making and the need for balance in the outer and inner aspects of life, run through many disciplines in the school whether in Bothmer movement, the arts or Language. For example, in Bothmer movement 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. The Eagle represents the need to balance our inner selves with the outer world.

Educational goals create opportunities for pupils to:

- Attain objectivity in feelings
- Develop social responsibility (e.g. use of biographies)
- Increased capacity to form judgements and/or making consequential decisions
- Promote independent enquiry and self directed tasks.

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

Class 12/13 pupils are poised on a great threshold, between the framework of school and their entrance onto the world stage. They grapple with their ever-strengthening individuality on the one hand, and the wish to live in a community on the other. As their vision broadens and expands, their thinking deepens. They now seek an overview in which they can reconcile and synthesise these two forces.

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 judgement 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 astronomy. 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 chose: charity workers from Africa, those who have set up small businesses, MP's, those working in social care, the army or the emergency services and 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.