

Curriculum Policy

Purpose

This policy gives an overview of the curriculum followed in the Kindergarten and the Lower School at Alder Bridge School.

Scope

This policy contains a general overview of the curriculum. Teachers implement this policy through long, medium and short term planning, with further reference to the documents listed below where detailed specifications of what is to be taught throughout the year in each subject for each year group is to be found.

References

The Educational Tasks and Content of the Steiner Waldorf Curriculum by Martin Rawson and Tobias Richter
Information about Steiner Waldorf Early Childhood Settings published by the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship 2013
Making Math Meaningful, A Source Book For Teaching Math by Jamie York
The Older Child in the SW Setting: The Embedded Curriculum
Curricular Purpose of some Activities for Children 5-7 years

Introduction

Alder Bridge School aims to provide a curriculum that meets the developmental stages of our pupils in order to foster their healthy learning and remove obstacles that prevent them from fulfilling their true potential. 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. It follows the pedagogical and curriculum indications developed from the educational philosophy of Rudolf Steiner. The Kindergarten Group and the Lower School Teachers Group provide a broad and balanced curriculum to meet the educational and social needs of pupils at their various stages of emotional, intellectual and physical development, taking into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan.

Alder Bridge School offers flexible kindergarten education for children aged 3 to 6 years - and full-time supervised education for pupils from 6 to 14 years of age which gives pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education through the Steiner-Waldorf curriculum.

Curriculum Overview

The Steiner-Waldorf curriculum reflects and supports the developing consciousness of the pupils at each stage of their life in school. It supports the emerging unique individuality of each child and their connection with the world.

The Steiner-Waldorf curriculum is an invaluable resource for teachers who are working to support children in the processes of awakening to knowledge of themselves, of feeling a connection to the world and to finding their bearings within it. It is an adaptable resource that provides guidelines for appropriate skills and content to bring to each age group and gives the teacher opportunities to adapt and develop according to the needs of the pupils in their class.

The teachers have a deep care for the wellbeing of each child. Personal, social, health and economic education is brought to the children in a way which fits the school ethos and meets statutory

requirements. The Steiner-Waldorf curriculum inspires and supports the development of British (Human) Values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. These values are an integral part of the education. The school aims to prepare pupils effectively for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society through engagement with public institutions and contact with a wide range of members of society in England.

Kindergarten

The Kindergarten is a Steiner Waldorf early childhood provision where the children are grouped in mixed ages between 3-6 years. The aim in Kindergarten is to build a bridge between home and school by creating a safe, warm and loving environment, and to work with the child's will through activity and imitation. The day follows a regular rhythm of creative play, songs and counting games, activities such as food preparation, bread making, painting or modelling, morning snack, outdoor play and story time. There is a seasonal rhythm and festivals are celebrated throughout the year. We follow the Early Years Foundation Stage, with exemptions from certain aspects of Literacy, Numeracy and Understanding the World, along with all Steiner Waldorf settings. In Kindergarten the content of the child's whole environment is the learning context; discovery through creative and physical play, and social interaction with peers and teachers constitute the main education themes which support each child to become an imaginative, resilient, creative and eager learner.

Activities are appropriate to the children's educational needs in relation to personal, social, emotional, physical, and communication and language development, related both to the individual children's needs and interests and to the work of the whole group. In the final year (age 5-6) there is an additional curriculum one afternoon a week which supports the children's growing independence and developing skills through handwork, stories and games.

Lower School

Children leave kindergarten to join Class 1 in the September after their 6th birthday. The Class Teacher is responsible for the pastoral care of the children in their class and for delivering the Main Lesson curriculum which covers the core subject areas such as Maths, English, History, Geography and Science. The Class Teacher continues with the same class from Class 1 to Class 8, unless circumstances prevent this. This continuity means that the Class Teacher knows each pupil and the social dynamic of the class very well and so can facilitate the successful management of social and interpersonal issues that relate to the increasing maturity of the pupils.

We generally have 'combined classes' at Alder Bridge School, consisting of two year groups taught together in one class of no more than 16 children. Class 1 in a combined Class 1/2 have dedicated time to focus on the Class 1 curriculum, and from Class 2/3 the curriculum runs from January to January to offer children the Main Lesson topics relevant to their development at the optimum times.

From Class 1 onwards the emphasis is on developing pupils' artistic expression and social capacities to foster creative and analytical modes of understanding. The core subjects of the curriculum are delivered in the Main Lesson, which focuses on one topic continuously for three to five weeks. A new topic is introduced in each block through which other subjects are woven so that the children sense the interconnectedness of all things. The Main Lesson is taught at the beginning of the day and lasts for two hours, consisting of a variety of activities such as recitation, movement, singing, music, mental arithmetic, recall, practical exploration, book work and stories. The use of art, crafts and drama ensure that the Main Lesson is an artistic and integrated whole in which the specific curriculum content for a particular age group is brought to the children in a way that engages and inspires. Recall usually takes place the day after new material has been presented. This is to enable new material to be absorbed and digested overnight, supporting a richer comprehension than immediate recall may provide.

The school day starts with a two-hour multi-disciplinary Main Lesson taught to the whole class by the Class Teacher. Subject Lessons are taught after the morning break and lunch break. These vary depending upon the age of the class but typically include French, German, Handwork, Eurythmy, Games, Life Stories, Music, Gardening and Crafts, providing a balance of academic, artistic, social and physical activities.

Children are screened termly to assess their progress in key skills, and appropriate interventions to support children with a wide range of needs are made available. The school also liaises and works with external agencies to support the needs of all children. More information on this can be found in our SEND policy.

The following section is currently under review

English

Drama

Gardening

Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHEE)

Including careers guidance and RSE

Maths

Class 1 – Introduction to addition, subtraction, multiplication and division Class 2 – Mental practice and longer exercises, moving on to larger numbers, number bonds, odd and even numbers, columns and carrying over and simple geometry Class 3 – Practice of all 12 tables continues; long multiplication and long division will be introduced, together with money handling and change, and various forms of measurement involving linear dimensions, liquids, solids and time Class 4– Introduction of fractions; measurements and area work continue in combination with the study of geography Class 5 – Compass geometry are introduced, also the decimal system Class 6 – Percentages, profit and loss, simple interest and proportion and ratio are covered; geometry lessons introduce the use of the protractor Class 7 – Graphs and algebra, geometry Class 8 – Fractions, squares and roots, equations and practical problems.

Humanities

A rich immersion in the humanities begins in Class 1, as each day children listen with rapt attention as the teacher tells a fairy tale or nature story. Progressing through the classes, the children absorb the legends of saints, multicultural folklore, Native American tales, Norse mythology and sagas; stories of Ancient India, Persia, Mesopotamia, Egypt and Greece; the History of Western civilization from Rome through the Middle Ages, the rise of Islam, the Age of Exploration, the Renaissance and Reformation. In the early years, by “living into” these cultures through legends and literature, children gain flexibility and an appreciation for the diversity of mankind. The study of geography as a separate subject begins in Class 4 and starts with a study of the immediate environment, broadening out in the following years to regional, national and global studies. Class 4 – Project work based on the study of the geography of the local area. Class 5 – Geography of the British Isles. History: The culture and religion of early civilisations of India, Persia, Babylonia and Egypt, moving on to classical ancient Greek history. Class 6 – European physical and human geography. History Roman Empire, Roman Britain; field trip to Roman site, the rise of Christianity, Saxon and Danish invasions of Britain, William the Conqueror. Class 7 – World geography, including focus on one continent and looking at the cultural, material and economic conditions of specific societies. History: the Middle Ages and the transition from feudalism to the Renaissance, and the Age of Discovery with the great voyages of the 15th to the 17th centuries Class 8 – Climate, weather systems, trade and wealth of nations.

Modern Foreign Languages

From Class 1 onwards, children learn a wide range of German and French vocabulary and short phrases through songs, verses, poems, recitation, games and cultural activities. The written language is

introduced towards the end of Class 3 or beginning of Class 4 where pupils also begin to gain an understanding of the grammar, spelling, phonics and structure of the language.

Technology and ICT

Pupils are introduced to a wide range of simple technologies through their practical creative work starting with cooking and sewing. As they get older this develops to include gardening, building, woodwork, pottery and metalwork. In these activities they use an increasing range of hand tools, and learn how mechanical tools function. E-safety and computer technology are introduced towards the end of the Lower School when the pupils have developed an understanding of a range of mechanical technologies in the broad context of other disciplines.

Religious Education

Religious Education meets the local Agreed Syllabus. The moral and spiritual well-being of the children is nurtured by developing a strong sense of belonging for all children whatever their faith background. This is achieved through a calendar of seasonal festivals that the school celebrates together. A sense of reverence and an attitude of tolerance and respect towards each other is encouraged and modelled by the teachers and reinforced by verses said at the beginning and end of the day. From Class 2 pupils have a separate RE lesson each week where they learn about historic and contemporary religious beliefs from all the main religious traditions. Pupils develop a well-informed understanding of world religions, and a strong sense of the value of community and of the wonder of the natural world.

Eurythmy

Eurythmy is an art of movement that engages the whole human being. It aims to harmonise the child physical well-being with their feelings or emotions. Regular eurythmy practice lessons help children to become more coordinated, graceful and alert and to be more at ease with themselves. In the eurythmy lesson the children move to poetry, prose text and live instrumental music and this experience deepens their aesthetic appreciation of literature and music and complements other aspects of the curriculum. Eurythmy also requires the children to work in groups which develops spatial awareness and a capacity to sense the movements of the group as a whole, while also concentrating on their own movement.

Physical Education

There is both integrated and discrete physical education. Integrated physical education includes the movement exercises that come at the beginning of Main Lesson to help the pupils to settle their focus for learning. The use of rhythm and movement may come into many lessons such as maths, where pupils may throw and catch bean bags as they recite times tables, or a foreign language, where pupils might follow a sequence of movements when learning parts of the body. In Class 4 children are taken sailing and have the opportunity to work towards a Level 1 or Level 2 qualification. Weekly games lessons include a wide range of team games. In the younger classes games are always introduced with a story so that the physical activity has an imaginative focus. Ball games are introduced with rules tailored to the age group. In Class 5 the ancient Greek Olympic events are introduced: running, jumping, wrestling, discus and javelin. From Class 6 to Class 8 the pupils are introduced to a range of activities such as hockey, badminton, volleyball and basketball as well as some gymnastics.

The Natural Environment

The curriculum respects the restorative benefits of the natural world and the outdoor programme includes land work, farming, and a range of science main lessons, field trips, as well as well-planned outdoor spaces for playing, and opportunities to hold lessons in outdoor classrooms. Science is introduced through a series of Main Lessons, starting with Man and Animal in Class 3 when the class is presented with a project that focuses on the creatures that move in and around the earth. Then the British Isles is studied and the animal theme is continued, usually looking at animals that are native to our islands. In Class 5, the focus in the science Main Lesson shifts one step closer to the earth itself with the study of the plant kingdom and in Class 6 it moves on to the earth itself, with a Main Lesson in

Mineralogy. In these Main Lessons the scientific approach stresses the activity of the senses rather than the activity of dissecting and analysing the parts, because children at this stage learn most through what they can see, hear, smell, taste or touch. The aim is to bring the children's senses to life and science is a stimulating means to this goal.

Music

Music is taught in an integrated way and as a separate subject. Singing and recorder playing is used in Main Lesson in a wide variety of contexts and all children sing daily. In the weekly music lesson all pupils learn musical notation and pupils have the opportunity to learn other musical instruments.

Art

Art is taught in an integrated way and as a separate subject. Artistic work is an integral part of the Main Lesson and in a wide variety of contexts. Pupils have opportunities to learn a wide range of art techniques in weekly art lessons.

Handwork

Handwork is an integral part of the curriculum for all children from Class 1 to Class 8. It provides a balancing element to the intellectual activities experienced elsewhere in the curriculum and is designed to aid the harmonious development of the child. The scheme of work is taken from Rudolf Steiner's indications, which outline examples of activities that match the developmental stage of the child, ensure progression and are tailored to suit the needs of the teaching group. Examples of Handwork skills that are taught in the weekly lesson include sewing, knitting, crochet, weaving, tailoring, dyeing and felting, with importance placed on the use of high quality, beautiful and natural materials in order to enhance the artistic and creative development of the child.

Crafts

As well as practical activities guided by the class teacher, such modelling and painting, pupils are also taught various crafts in other subject based lessons. From Class 1 to Class 8 a weekly Handwork lesson gives each child the opportunity to develop a range of skills, such as knitting, sewing, weaving and crochet. From Class 6 all pupils begin to learn specialist crafts and this is continued wherever possible into the Upper School. Examples of crafts taught are: woodwork, wood carving, stone carving, green woodworking, metal work (and the use of a forge), ceramics (and the use of the wheel and kiln), textiles, paper making and book binding.

Approved by: Trustees

Next review date: September 2021