



Elmfield Rudolf Steiner School

Lower School Curriculum Statement

Issued by	School Lead
Last review	7/06/22
Approved by Council	June 2022
Circulation	Google Drive - Policies Website

Lower School Curriculum Statement

The Lower School curriculum meets the child from their change of teeth and continues to puberty. Our teachers aim to meet the children through feeling, imagination and rhythm; this is a step towards the co-ordination of thought, feeling and will. It is not just the learning of subjects and skills that is the most important factor in education, but the actual way in which they are taught and learned. Nourishing the children's feeling and imagination is laying the foundations for their future moral qualities. When presenting material, first comes the encounter; encounter becomes experience and out of the experiences crystallises the concept: three important steps in a genuine learning process.

The subjects taught during the Class Teacher years are chosen to reflect the stage of development of the children and enable them to discover the world and acquire a wide range of skills. The curriculum begins with the child in their own immediate surroundings, and then gradually expands as the child develops.

These subjects and main lesson themes are:

Class 1 (Year 2, age 6-7):

Child development and leitmotif for this class

One of the main characteristics of children between the seventh and ninth year [age 6-8] is their desire to learn, without any need to form their own judgements. Memory, imagination, enjoyment of rhythmical repetition and a desire for universal concepts presented in pictorial form, come to the fore at this stage. Children retain a bias towards accepting the authority of the adult world, but this is not now a matter of imitation but of concentrating attention upon major role models; these affect the child largely through the feeling of their words or moral strength of their actions. A child's inner question to the teacher is: 'Can you see who I really am?' and 'Can you help me encounter the world?'. This determines the teacher's position and relationship in regard to the child. These basic questions are answered in and through the lessons which aim not only to teach about experiencing the world but also to let the children actually experience the world. The teacher who succeeds in meeting these expectations set by the children will be accepted by them as an authority, something very different to attempting to control children as an authoritarian (adapted from Avison and Rawson, 2014)

Children in Class 1 are making the transition from Early Childhood education, with its focus on learning through imitation, practical activities and child-led play, into formal schooling, where there is more need to listen, wait, follow and participate. They learn to become part of a new learning community, building on the learning habits, dispositions and attitudes that have been fostered in kindergarten, and learning new classroom routines and behaviours. Children are ready and eager to take on the challenge of this new phase of their learning, keen to get started on the exciting adventures of literacy and numeracy. Teachers are ready to meet the children, however ready they are, and seek to integrate them into the learning community.

Stories are embodied and the imagination begins to map out interior spaces in a free, dreamy way as a balance to the need to focus on the structuring of numbers, letters, forms, rules. As children gain greater control of their limbs, feet and fingers, they also expand the internal spaces of the imagination, learning to focus their mental imaging.

The gesture of Class 1 is one of opening the book of learning and beginning the process of 'reading', in the sense of the Old English word, *rædan* - 'riddling'. Riddling conjures up working pictures of exploring, playing with, engendering curiosity and kindling interest. And the literacies that begin to develop are multi-disciplinary: not just English literacy, but mathematical, social, physical and artistic.

Narrative Themes

Folktales, tales of wonder and magic, nature tales.

Folktales, tales of wonder and transformation, tales of magic, sometime s called fairy tales, are characterized by the appearance of archetypes, or frequently recurring motifs that have specific narrative functions (e.g. the offer of magic help)and often appear in a specific order (e.g. like three trials) they are impervious to material facts and have their own internal logic and often reflect the cultures in which they were recorded. There are suggestions that many folktale motifs go back to a common proto-European language, but equally they can be the products of contemporary literature. Many such folk tales have a common narrative structure (preparation, complication, transference, struggle , return, recognition), similar to the structures found in myths.

Musical Themes

Qualities:

- Still pentatonic, fairly high in range, no strong pull to a key note.
- Fairly free in rhythm (unless skipping to the song).
- Constant repetition, and slight variations.

Topics: Songs to accompany activities, counting rhymes, seasonal and nature, fairy tales

Artistic Themes

Simple representation of people and animals in side profile, lack of perspective and proportion.

Painting colour stories and moods.

Materials: wax sticks and blocks, thick (Lyra) pencils, coloured chinks, watercolour paints (warm and cool primary colours), beeswax/organic plasticine/clay

Class 2 (Year 3, age 7-8):

Child development and leitmotif for this class

"One of the main characteristics of children between the seventh and ninth year [age 6-8] is their desire to learn, without any need to form their own judgements. Memory, imagination, enjoyment of rhythmical repetition and a desire for universal concepts presented in pictorial form, come to the fore at this stage. Children retain a bias towards accepting the authority of the adult world, but this is not now a matter of imitation but of concentrating attention upon major role models; these affect the child largely through the feeling of their words or moral strength of their actions. A child's inner question to the teacher is: 'Can you see who I really am?' and 'Can you help me encounter the world?'. This determines the teacher's position and relationship in regard to the child. These basic questions are answered in and through the lessons which aim not only to teach about experiencing the world but also to let the children actually experience the world. The teacher who succeeds in meeting these expectations set by the children will be accepted by

them as an authority, something very different to attempting to control children as an authoritarian”
Avison and Rawson, 2000

Children in Class 2 are alert, active, energetic learners. Their developmental task is to learn the rules of the road, the codes of the ways and byways and the morality of exemplars, notably figures whose spirituality is still embedded in nature rather than urban society. The pictorial and linguistic elements of teaching should be cultivated to support children’s need to act increasingly out of inner images. Still ‘hunter-gatherers’ (before they become sedentary farmers), this age group often require strong group activities with a clear focus and a wide range of challenges. The teacher requires energy and presence to meet this.

In the flow of nature, we follow archetypal human pathways and songlines that weave us into the world’s fabric. The writing flows, the reading murmurs, the numbers go up and down, fingers and feet adept - busy work for hungry children...

Narrative Themes

Legends and stories of admirable people and noble deeds. Fables. Nature stories.
Class library of appropriate graded readers and stories. Traditional-type stories and folk tales retold at an appropriate level. Verbal book reports

Musical Themes

Qualities:

- Pentatonic, Aeolian or Dorian modes.
- More rhythmic, some changes of tempo.
- Call and response, small and large groups in turn.

Topics: seasonal and nature, counting rhymes, times tables, significant people, fables.

Artistic Themes

Simple representations of animals and people, side and front profiles, addition of details
Painting atmospheres, and controlling colours and mixing
Materials: wax sticks and blocks, thick (Lyra) pencils, coloured chinks, watercolour paints (warm and cool primary colours), beeswax/organic plasticine/clay

Class 3 (Year 4, age 8-9):

Child development and leitmotif for this class

An experience of separation from a naive acceptance of the adult world beings to occur in the ninth year takes place at around nine years of age, i.e. in Class 3. Unconsciously at first, the children may begin to question the teacher’s authority (and that of significant adult others), which they have hitherto accepted unquestioningly almost like a law of nature. They now want to know whether what the teacher says really is securely based on real experience of the world and of life. On the whole this question remains at the subconscious level and is rarely put verbally, except in a growing tendency to criticise and challenge. The children now want to know that their admiration trust is justified. This means that new teaching methods and relationships are called for. Many children at this age experience an emergent insecurity regarding the relationships between self and other and this often expresses itself as a demand for certainty and also for boundaries. This can be met by showing the children that human societies have rules and that the relationships between people and the divine world can be regulated and that people have responsibilities for each other and for the stewardship of the creation. In mythical terms, the loss of paradise is a call to work, to work together to make it work. Rules are experienced as natural laws or divine gifts.

Between the ages of nine and twelve, rhythmical memory is at its strongest. The teaching method should draw on the child's natural interest in the world and structure the content rhythmically. Adapted from Avison and Rawson, 2014

In class 3 the developmental task is to learn to work with others, recognising that this requires cooperation, team work, rules, roles and tools. Teaching and curriculum content should provide a balance of subjectivity and objectivity as children learn that meeting basic human needs requires people to pull together and support each other in order to harness nature and her resources. This is balanced with the need to maintain a careful stewardship of nature.

The psychological and social challenge of the 'Rubicon' requires individuals to enter a new relationship to self and community that is no longer based on uncritical family acceptance and blood ties. This can be a painful experience of a loss of inner security and identification as children turn the question of purpose and identification towards the community and the natural world. They discover that human cooperation is the basis for a new sense of security and structure through cultural rules (measurement, syntax) and co-dependences, and the meeting of mutual needs as a basis for future economic thinking.

Narrative Themes

Archetypal practical life and living.
Stories from the Abrahamic tradition.

Musical Themes

Qualities:

- Heptatonic, modal, or major key.
- More rhythmic variation.
- Songs in compound time.
- Songs which can also be played on pipe/recorder.
- Rounds IF THEY ARE READY – ie if they can hold melody, pitch 5th.

Topics: Seasonal and farming. Songs for rhythmic activities. Songs with different moods for a variety of activities.

Artistic Themes

Beginnings of perspective (foreground/background), diagrammatic elements,
Painting – forms emerging from colour,

Materials: wax sticks and blocks, thick (Lyra) pencils, coloured chalks, watercolour paints, beeswax/organic plasticine/clay

Class 4 (Year 5, age 9-10):

Child development and leitmotif for this class

In class four children are still very much in childhood though the harbingers of major change appear here or there. The forces of an autonomous inner life are beginning to emerge in individualized ways, manifesting as embodied emotional energy and the ability to imagine other worlds. This can be both frightening and uplifting. Children begin to experience the need to regulate and shape their own relationships, follow their own interests and respond with great interest to narrative accounts of a wide range of psychological types and the complexity of their relationships. Friendship becomes more personal and exclusive. Their new-found depth of emotion needs and seeks a new relationship to the natural and cultural environment that

involves their active participation, alone and with others in the fields of sport, music, nature, art and technology- especially digital technologies. The journey becomes a quest with companions.

Narrative Themes

Stories of heroes/heroines
Legends of heroes from different cultures

Musical Themes

Qualities:

- Major key, major and minor modes.
- Contrast between songs in simple and compound timing.
- Lots of rounds, and work songs.
- Very simple splitting of parts.
- Songs that can be accompanied by pipes/recorders.

Topics: Seasonal and local traditions. Songs of local history/geography. Songs of the earth.

Artistic Themes

Illustration, pencil work,
Painting – developing an eye for composition, forms representing an inner impulse,
Materials: wax sticks and blocks, coloured pencils, coloured chalks, watercolour paints, beeswax/organic plasticine/clay, Caran d’ache pencils

Class 5 (Year 6, age 10-11):

Child development and leitmotif for this class

There is much evidence that the earlier onset of puberty leads to significant changes in the child’s relationship to self and body, self and others and self and world. Thus the developmental descriptors for classes 4, 5 and 6 have to be taken as an overlapping continuum. This means that children are in a transition from childhood to puberty, though this is very individual and girls tend to enter puberty before the boys. Some children are still very harmonious and fluid in their movements while others experience changes in their bodies. Many children are often strong willed, self-reliant and creative at this age and their intellect is emerging in ways that enable to begin to understand more abstract concepts, such as time and space.

They should have opportunities to expand their imaginative thinking in a range of spatial and temporal dimensions and their transformations, extend their powers of speech, recitation and dialogue through practice, experience how different cultures express their relationship to spirit and the natural and how the person relates to society, as well as archetypal narratives of individual quests. At this age children’s focus of attention and attachment begins to shift from teachers to peers and friendships assume greater significance. This brings significant changes in the social and communicative processes the child is embedded in, which can also mean that children can be vulnerable if such relationships are broken or denied and the risk of marginalization becomes greater.

Narrative Themes

Multicultural mythology

Musical Themes

Qualities:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major key, major and minor modes, some pentatonic (eg Scots) • Songs for dancing, songs that carry a strong mood. • Any simple timing or compound timing including compound triple. • Rhythms for walking, running, skipping. • Two part songs and more challenging rounds, solo lines <p>Topics: Songs from all around British Isles. Songs for traditions of these islands. Songs for M/L on India, Persia, Ancient Greece. Songs for class play. Songs about plants/animals.</p>
Artistic Themes
<p>Integrating illustration and text, detailed and accurate drawing, beginning shadows</p> <p>Painting – layering, receding landscapes</p> <p>Modelling human figures</p> <p>Materials: coloured pencils, coloured chalks, watercolour paints, clay, Caran d’ache pencils</p>

Class 6 (Year 7, age 11-12):

Child development and leitmotif for this class
<p>‘Generally the child’s growth begins to express itself in the skeleton. The limbs begin to lengthen; the child develops a tendency for awkward, angular movements. The twelve year old experiences the strength of gravity through the skeleton. The physical change is accompanied by the first experience of causation in the thinking realm, while psychologically, the child enters a phase which may be characterised as the ‘changeling’ period. The twelve year old witnesses what may be described as the death of childhood and the birth pangs of the individual.’ Avison and Rawson 2000</p> <p>Puberty brings many changes the young person’s relationship to her body, to other people and to the world, most of which are liberating and unproblematical. At this age youngsters can be highly capable, fun, lively, loud, curious, imaginative, brave and in a way both ‘grown-up’ and yet unburdened by the world’s problems. Physical growth and body change in endless individual variation is the norm, with girls usually being ahead of the boys in this respect. The children are physically stronger and can apply this to real bodily work in the garden or crafts or moving furniture. Their intellect is usually fully awakened, which makes them capable of thinking causally and logically, as well as seeing fault and weaknesses in logic. This capacity is often not matched by self-awareness and this can be socially poisonous. Their intelligence needs to be applied meaningfully to practical problem solving, conceptual tasks, and understanding cause and effect in the material and cultural worlds. In contrast to their outer behaviour quite a few young people also begin to develop private and intimate experiences through close relationships, diary writing, hobbies (involving relationships with animals). Students need age and developmentally appropriate tasks- they are no longer children- particularly in all technical fields ranging from tool use, to science and the techniques of literacy. They also need to learn social ‘techniques’ such as non-violent communication, conflict avoidance and resolution, health and well-being issues (e.g. food, body care, sexuality). The acceleration of puberty combined with models of sexuality in the media and access to social and digital media can be problematic when their use is not accompanied by understanding. Meeting the varied needs of a group of class 6 students is a considerable challenge best met by a team of teachers.</p>
Narrative Themes
Historical fiction and biographies.
Musical Themes
Qualities:

- Major and Minor, Modern minor key with #7th, Phrygian modes.
- Some harder rounds.
- Drones, crooked drones and clashing notes.
- Two, or even three part songs, depending on ability.
- 7/8, Balkan 9/8.

Topics: Songs from all over Europe. Songs about ancient Rome. Marches. Songs for class play. Songs from Middle Ages (incl. drones)

Artistic Themes

Drawing – grayscale, special illusions, creating depth through shading, colour theory in drawing/painting

Painting – veil painting, lightening and darkening colours with black/white

Modelling landscapes, groups of human figures

Materials: watercolour paints and inks, clay, Caran d'ache pencils, charcoal sticks/pencils, graphite pencils, gouache,

Class 7 (Year 8, age 12-13):

Child development and leitmotif for this class

In class 7 the students are often confronted with a range of developmental challenges that can push them to their limits and beyond. The experience of powerlessness and injustice can be overpowering, prompting responses from self-harm, inner emigration, eating disorders, aggression towards self and others, challenges to all forms of authority. At the same new levels of sensitivity, empathy, identification can open young people to others and to the world. They can respond to social injustice in the present and past with deeply felt concern. In this class a major theme is meeting the other, finding commonality in difference and discovering that people can find solutions together based on empirical evidence combined with imagination. In order to be able to do this they have to direct their gaze and attention to details in the world, away from their own emotional responses. One very rich field of life experience is the outdoor world of nature and activities such as hiking, climbing, bivouacking, that involve extremes of effort, technical skills, companionship as well as more reflective activities such as tracking and bird watching that bring the students into close encounters with nature. Teachers are required who can be role models of cooperation with good listening skills and sensitivity, self-humour and honesty who mediate the feeling, life is complex and sometimes bad, but together we can make a difference.

Narrative Themes

Youth literature, historical fiction from the Middle Ages to the 19th Century

Musical Themes

Qualities:

Any key, any rhythm, simple polyphony but NOT rounds, as they are hard for changing voices to pitch.

Simple three part songs, with lower part suited to boys voices.

Fairly narrow range in all parts, don't pitch too high.

Topics:

Geography & travel influencing music (in preparation for fusion): songs that have travelled (to USA, from USA, Appalachian and Cajun songs, songs from South America).

Songs expressing contrasting emotions.

Songs that tell a story – ballads.

Songs from Renaissance – madrigals may be a little too hard as yet...

Artistic Themes

Drawing and painting – perspective and shadow, colour landscapes

Modelling gesture and movement

Materials: watercolour paints and inks, clay, Caran d’ache pencils, charcoal sticks/pencils, graphite pencils, gouache

Class 8 (Year 9, age 13-14):**Child development and leitmotif for this class**

In class 8 the students can justifiably celebrate the culmination of a life phase and anticipate the transition into the high school. This is year of projects, individual and collective that in a sense sum up all that has been learned and developed so far. As in the previous class, students need to engage with the world, and particularly the social world, with practical environmental or social projects that do good. The emphasis is doing something well that is of value to other people and the world, as well as showing the skills have been acquired- it is less a celebration of self and more a celebration of what is good in human society and culture. This is the true source of deep personal satisfaction and fulfilment and is particularly important in an egotistical world of celebrity. The focus in the classroom is on the world as it is today in all its political, economic, scientific and cultural complexity and conflicts- the 20th and 21st Centuries are the main theme. The balance between collective and individual qualities is important; the universal human (e.g. anatomy) and the unique biography. Class 8 needs a team of teachers who can respond to the wide range of challenges and accompany the many projects, including facilitating a review in depth of the past 8 years.

Narrative Themes

Contemporary Youth Literature; historical fiction and biographies from the 19th Century to the present day; high quality literature and non-fiction from the 19th Century

Musical Themes

Qualities:

- Any key, any rhythms, some polyphony.
- Introduction to basic four part singing, not rounds. Keep range of each part narrow to allow for changing voices.
- Songs with integral movement

Topics: Madrigals may be possible now. South African songs in four parts. Songs from industrial revolution, French revolution, Folk revival.

Artistic Themes

Drawing and painting – one and two point perspective, shadow, veil painting

Modelling dramatic gesture

Materials: watercolour paints and inks, clay, Caran d’ache pencils, charcoal sticks/pencils, graphite pencils, gouache

In addition, the children also experience subject lessons in German (all classes), Spanish (all classes) and Eurythmy, games, gym, handwork, art and craft, and music. Classes 4-8 have a weekly choir session and Classes 6-8 meet once a week for orchestra. Classes 3 and 4 visit Halesowen swimming baths for weekly swimming lessons. Class 6 has gardening lessons, Class 7 and 8 have cookery lessons.