



Curriculum Policy

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in full every two years.

This Policy was reviewed and agreed July 2016

The Policy is due for review in July 2018

The aims and underlying principles of the curriculum at Rudolf Steiner School Kings Langley (RSSKL)

Our curriculum is based on Rudolf Steiner's understanding of child development and his guidelines on educating the child in correspondence with key developmental stages. In a safe and secure environment conducive to learning and creativity, our curriculum is designed to provide the opportunities to experience a broad and balanced education which encourages them to fulfil their potential in the many different areas relevant to their abilities, skills and interests and in accordance with their spiritual, intellectual, emotional and physical development; and acquire and develop the knowledge, understanding, skills and qualifications necessary:

- To progress with confidence to the next stage of their life and education through a process which encourages them to engage in lifelong learning
- Move into adult life with a knowledge of personal strengths and weaknesses, with a wish to develop the former and work on the latter
- To make a worthwhile contribution to society
- To enter into the fluctuating and unpredictable reality of adult working life with conscious expectation to participate as effective citizens in a multi-cultural society
- To develop for themselves an active and healthy lifestyle
- To enable students to develop a sense of personal and cultural identity that is confident, open to change and receptive and respectful to other identities
- Develop the Key Skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT in addition to cultural, musical and Artistic skills
- Appreciate human achievement in the creative and expressive Arts, science, technology, humanities and physical pursuits, and experience a sense of personal achievement in some of these fields
- Develop co-operative and interpersonal skills and acquire the study skills necessary to realize individual learning potential
- Develop individual ideas, become receptive to new ideas and make independent and informed decisions which affect themselves and others
- Acquire an understanding of the global social, economic and political issues and the interdependence of individuals, groups and nations
- Appreciate the complex human interaction with, and dependence upon, local and global ecology, and develop a caring and responsible attitude towards the environment

CURRICULUM STATEMENT

This section summarises the Steiner Waldorf curriculum as it is practised at RSSKL. It first addresses the education by age group, before looking at themes carried through the whole education. The section concludes with an analysis of particular subjects taught.

The Kindergarten

What the school's Kindergarten offers

Children enter the Kindergarten between the ages of three and six. Five sessions per week are offered, and each session lasts for approximately four hours. Afternoon care is available if required. A parent and child group and a parent and baby group are also provided for younger children.

General principles

Cognitive, social, emotional and physical skills are accorded equal value in Steiner Kindergartens and many different competencies are developed. Activities reflect the concerns, interests, and developmental stages of the child. The carefully structured environment is designed to foster both personal and social learning. A young child's learning is connected to their physical body and so everything they see, hear, and touch has an effect. To enhance this sensory experience the Kindergarten is a clean, orderly, beautiful and peaceful setting, promoting natural material and warm textures. The physical environment provides a varied and nourishing opportunity for self directed learning.

Teaching is by example rather than by direct instruction and is integrated rather than subject based. The curriculum is adapted to the child. In recognition of its vital role in early education, children are given time for play.

Emphasis is given to regular patterns of activities, both within the day and over the week. A cyclical pattern is reflected in themes of work related to seasons of the year.

The nature of the early years

The physical, emotional and cognitive development of young children is subtly and inextricably linked. This view underpins and informs this early years curriculum. This educational philosophy comes from a recognition of three seven-year cycles of development: the first from birth to seven, the second from seven to fourteen and the third from fourteen to maturity at twenty one. The curriculum is tailored to meet the child's changing needs during each phase.

At each stage, the child presents a particular set of physical, emotional and intellectual characteristics which require a particular educational response in return. This is the basis of child-centred education. The first phase, the formative period before second dentition, is seen as the period of greatest physical growth and development. Structures in the brain are being refined and elaborated, a process which is not completed until after the change of teeth, and until that time the young child's primary mode of learning is through doing and experiencing – he or she 'thinks' with their entire physical being. They are open, trusting and the world around them 'impresses' itself on the young child, whose development is shaped by these impressions.

The nature of this early learning should be self-motivated, allowing the child to come to know the world in the way most appropriate to his or her age, as mentioned above, like active feeling and touching, in other words through doing. Only when new capabilities appear, at around the seventh year, are the children physically, emotionally and intellectually ready for formal instruction. Through experiential, self motivated physical activity the young child 'grasps the impressing world' in order to understand it – an essential pre-requisite for the later activity of grasping the world

though concepts. The children are expected to master physical skills before abstract intellectual ones.

More specifically, the developmental stages of the child as they progress through the Kindergarten years are as follows:

- The three year old settles into the group, which establishes rhythm. The child is still reliant upon the adult as they are not yet separated from the world around them. They are finding boundaries to the world in a physical way and are beginning to learn about their own 'self-boundaries' as they find their way socially in the group.
- The four year old makes a greater connection to the rhythm of Kindergarten and their social and fantasy play develop. Movement is fostered in play and creative discipline becomes more effective.
- The five and six year old establishes stronger social skill as well as showing signs of the readiness for school. One can see a greater consciousness of the child in him or herself in comparison to the three year old at the beginning of their time in Kindergarten. The children's gross and fine motor skills also increase, as do planned play and organised, pre-conceived ideas.

Early years' education

Providing opportunities for children to be active in meaningful imitation

To complement the maturational timetable, imitation is acknowledged as the prime means of children's learning – hence adults in the Kindertartens teach by imitation and most of what children learn at this stage is imparted by example. The child learns *for life from life* and in this way the Kindergarten teacher surrounds the children with purposeful activities like cooking, baking and caring for their environment. Adult activities stimulate direct responses in the young child and teachers carry out their daily tasks with love and care, striving to be a role model worthy of imitation.

The Kindergarten is a community of 'doers' and we support our community through our work, for example by baking our own bread. The children are welcome but not required to help. The activity of the teacher may inspire the children to become independently active, finding their own learning situation in play. Children perceive and register everything we do – it is not only what we do in front of the young child but also how we do it. Gestures, thoughts and feelings are perceived and imitated by the young child and teachers are conscious of their own moral influence in the development of good habits upon the child.

The forces of imitation, which are so important in helping the young child know and understand the world in this first phase, naturally diminish and give way to a new kind of knowing which, as referred to earlier, appears at around the time of second dentition. This is the time when teaching 'by example' moves more into formal teaching by instruction. The curriculum changes as one phase of child development comes to a close and another begins.

Working with rhythm and repetition

Steiner Waldorf Kindertartens identify rhythm as an important education principle. Children need the reassurance of continuity, and so regular events mark the

Kindergarten year, week and day. Seasonal activities celebrate the cycles of the year – autumn in Kindergarten might be a time for threshing and grinding and spring a time for planting. A 'seasonal area' reflects the changing natural world throughout the year, as do the themes of our songs, stories and poems. In addition, each week has its own regular rhythm of recurring activities i.e. baking day, painting day, gardening day.

Every day has its own smaller rhythms which support the day's activities. These daily rhythms help the child to feel secure and to know what to expect. The day is structured so that there is a varied pace – with periods of contraction and expansion – providing a balance between times of activity and times of rest. In practice, this might mean that creative play would be followed by a more concentrated circle time, or energetic outdoor activity followed by a quiet story. There is a rhythmic alternation between the 'child's time' (creative play, outside time) and the teacher's time (circle time, story), the teacher's time being comparatively short at this age. A strong and regular rhythm promotes security and self-confidence. This supports the principles of living with change, knowing their place in the world, and developing an understanding of past, present and future. It provides a real foundation for the understanding of time – what has gone before and what will follow – and helps children to relate to the natural and the human world. The curriculum is based on a philosophy that attention to rhythm promotes healthy development and leads to a balanced life later.

Repetition also plays a key role in establishing continuity and in the healthy development of memory. Children's memories are strengthened by recurring experiences. Daily, weekly and yearly events in Kindergarten are remembered and often eagerly anticipated a second time around. Stories are told not just once, but many times – repetition brings the opportunity for children to familiarise themselves with the material and to deepen their relationship to it.

Encouraging personal, social and moral development

Children learn to interact with each other through their creative play and daily social activities. In Kindergarten they learn to share, to work together and to co-operate. They know and trust their teachers and are able to establish effective relationships with other children and adults. Teachers and children care for and respect each other.

Much emphasis is placed on caring for the environment – both indoors and out. Wooden toys, for example, can be polished and mended, unlike their plastic counterparts. Where possible, gardening and composting activities introduce children to the idea of ecology and form an important part of the curriculum. There are moments of reverence each day and teachers lovingly create opportunities for children to experience joy, awe and wonder. Kindness is practised by teachers and encouraged in the children. Festivals provide rich cultural experiences for the child. Traditional fairytales and nature stories address the feeling realm and gradually awaken a fine moral sense for knowing what is right and wrong. The teacher sets the example and has certain expectations of the children.

Providing an integrated learning experience

The learning experience of children under seven should be integrated and not compartmentalised. Young children need to experience the relevance of their world before they separate themselves from it and begin to analyse it in a detached way. Consequently learning in Kindergarten is integrated rather than subject based.

Mathematics and the use of mathematical language, for example, might take place at the cooking table, where food is prepared (thinly sliced carrots make wonderful natural circles and have the added virtue of being able to be eaten later in soup!) and concepts such as addition and subtraction (or more or less), weight, measurement, quantity and shape are grasped in a practical manner as part of daily life. Mealtimes offer an opportunity for the moral, social and mathematical to work together as children engage in place-setting and the sharing of food which has been prepared earlier for everyone to eat.

Through movement games, children recognise and recreate patterns – in, out, alternate, in front of, and behind. Natural objects such as acorns, pine cones, conkers and shells are provided for sorting, ordering and counting, as part of spontaneous play. Children are directly involved in mathematical experience and use mathematical language in a natural way which is usually embedded in a social and moral context. Learning experiences for the young child are not separated from the business of daily living: the curriculum's philosophy is that learning gains meaning by its relevance to life.

As indicated above, a similar approach is taken to the teaching of language and literacy. Children develop competence in talking, listening and in the ability to use words with confidence. They learn to speak freely and listen to others. Good speech and the development of oral skills are promoted. We concentrate on the oral tradition and the children listen to many wonderful stories – which belong to the story-telling heritage of cultures.

A well-told story creates an appreciation for the human voice and the beauty and rhythms of the language. It also helps to expand vocabulary and to aid the development of a good memory. Children leave Kindergarten with a rich and varied repertoire of songs, stories, and poems; this might also include verses in French and German, or any other language that children in the Kindergarten might speak. Much of this learning takes place in the integrated way described - although story-time is always a very special event.

Children engage in many activities, such as sewing, which develop hand to eye co-ordination, manual dexterity and orientation (useful preparation for reading print from left to right). They also discuss their own drawings and take great delight in telling stories by 'reading' their pictures. This activity promotes the development of verbal skills and frees the narrative from the printed text, thus encouraging the children to use their own words. Many children also act out or perform puppet shows and develop dramatic skills through working with narrative and dialogue. Painting and drawing help with balance and symmetry and most five year olds are able to write their own name. Children experience the musicality of language and its social aspects through playing circle games and Eurythmy (a form of movement which works with language and music).

The combination of these activities cultivates a love of language, promotes fluency and allows children time to become familiar with the spoken word – the best preparation and foundation for the subsequent development of literacy. Use of language also affects cognitive development as well –chosen words and syntax support clear thinking.

Encouraging learning through creative play and supporting physical development

Creative and self-directed play are central to Steiner early years education, in which the task is to support the child in his or her imaginative endeavours. The provision of

simple, natural play materials help to nurture the child's senses, maximising imaginative potential. Such play materials allow the child's imagination to transform one item into another (for example, a sea shell can become a bowl, a boat or a telephone and a muslin cloth can become a knight's cloak or a roof for a house). Children are able to exercise and consolidate their ability to understand and to think through their play. Creative play supports physical, emotional and social development and allows children to learn through investigation, exploration and discovery. It also gives scope for the use of imagination – an essential aspect of human intelligence. Play encourages the child to become inventive and adaptable, and to work with initiative and flair. In addition, it develops and strengthens concentration.

Studies show that children who score highest in socio-dynamic play also demonstrate the greatest gains in a number of cognitive areas such as higher intellectual competence, longer attention span, and more innovation and imagination. Good players also show more empathy toward others, less aggression, and in general more social and emotional adjustment. We would expect time and space to be given to creative play and a selection of suitable objects, for instance cloths, shells, logs, domestic toys and dolls to be provided in order to support a variety of play situations.

Encouraging children to know and love the world

As mentioned in the above section on rhythm and repetition, children develop a good relationship with the natural world. They learn to value its gifts and to understand its processes and patterns of change. Domestic tasks provide opportunities for elementary experiences in science and good use is made of the four elements. Children make toys from sheep's wool, wood, felt, cotton and other natural materials. Many items are made as gifts for family members. Family participation is encouraged and teachers, working with parents, create 'birthday stories' which are based on the child's personal biography and are told at special birthday ceremonies to which families are invited.

The children enjoy and experience the natural, beautiful surroundings of the Kindergarten setting and the Kindergarten teachers may take their children on short local walks, or even on longer walks out of the school grounds as the children grow stronger. Many wonderful 'treasures of the earth' are found throughout the year that are tenderly cared for to decorate their nature tables in the classroom or at home.

Providing a safe, child-friendly environment

The Kindergarten should be a warm and welcoming place, an artistically shaped free space which serves as the setting for what the day brings. Each day's 'impulse' is a mixture of child motivated play experiences and teacher structured activities.

There are few 'finished' toys which demand to be used in a predetermined way.

Furniture is small-scale and child-friendly. As mentioned, the day is structured so as to provide the child with periods of activity and periods of rest.

Groups are usually of a mixed age range. Older children, who are familiar with the rhythm of the Kindergarten, are able to help the younger members of the group to feel secure.

Working with parents

In fostering the above described environment, the relationship between Kindergarten and parents is central. Teachers strive to support, trust and offer guidance to

parents, in order that consistency between the child's experiences is supported so far as this is possible.

Teachers are committed to establishing good relationships with parents and to the process of developing parenting skills. They recognise the importance of a happy, smooth transition from home to school, working closely with parents to achieve this. Some of the children entering Kindergarten are coming from the parent and child group. This gives the opportunity for the Kindergartens to make a good rapport with the family before the child enters Kindergarten. Teachers promote and emphasise the importance of close partnerships with parents. They also create links with parents through a range of social and school-based events and activities.

Introduction into formal learning

Throughout the child's time at Kindergarten, one can refer to several examples of their development and gradual readiness for formal learning:

- In drawing, one sees movement from chaos to form. The three year old's unfocused scribbles become the six year old's detailed rich representation of the surrounding world.
- In movement, the simple act of putting on slippers challenges the three year old, but, by contrast, the challenges to the six year old become skipping, climbing, and running with skill and agility.
- The three old's play (that finds them *next* to but not necessarily playing *with* another child), slowly becomes the rich and limitless social five year old's, where the child is fully active and utilising strong imaginative skills to transform any unformed plaything into what they wish. By the age of six, creative play becomes inner fantasy; the 'me' becomes 'us' and 'I' becomes 'we'.
- In language, the three year old plays with sounds and words somewhat unconsciously, but as they approach the age of six they consciously begin to rhyme and play with words and sounds. Vocabulary, alliteration and understanding develop over this time as well.

Many years of experience confirm that literacy and numeracy, as formal skills, are best taught when the child has reached a point of maturation which corresponds to the emergence of the second teeth. Indeed this timing is 'the norm' in most European countries and in Asian countries such as Taiwan and Singapore, whose education systems have received praise for their academic results in recent years. Class 1 pupils (at 6+) learn to read and to work formally with numbers with enthusiasm and alacrity because:

- a) they have reached a point of developmental readiness;
- b) the diversity of lively hands-on experience, which they have encountered in their Kindergartens, supports and enriches their learning process; and
- c) they are motivated learners, unburdened by early failure.

Experience and results have shown that children starting formal learning at 6+ in Steiner Waldorf schools have caught up with children following the National Curriculum by Key Stage 2.

Lower School

Classes 1 to 3 - Formal learning begins in the child's 7th year when the imitation and 'learning through doing' experienced in the Kindergarten transform into teacher-led learning. The child's capacity for independent, representational and pictorial thinking is now beginning to come to the fore and the method of education responds accordingly. Movement and rhythmic activity remain strong aspects of Classes 1-3 (for example: skipping, clapping and stepping games) and these support the development of numeracy, literacy and Artistically-presented work. The mood begins with one of dreamy wholeness, with new material presented largely through picture and story. The archetypal images of fairy stories nourish the child's holistic experience of the external. The Kindergarten's principles of imitation and situational memory are continued alongside reverence for nature, respect for the environment and for each other.

In Class 2 skills are developed through artistic and imaginative work which fosters the growth of the child's personal thought-pictures. The curriculum cultivates a sense for the breadth and richness of the language of the feelings and emotions. Short fables, with their humorous one-sidedness, and stories of the saints, as an image of humanity, are recalled orally. This work leads into short written pieces. Gross and fine motor skills are cultivated and refined through the flute playing, handwork and rhythmic work.

In Class 3, around age 9, there are significant changes in the child's physiological, psychological and cognitive make-up. Experiences are felt more strongly, and a growing sense of objectivity develops. Questions, doubts, aloneness and a tendency to criticism may emerge, changing both behaviour and the psychological landscape fundamentally. The children unconsciously begin to question the authority of the teacher but in the security of the teacher's knowledge and experience of the world, the child is guided through a time of change and the Class is moulded into a "we", as a basis for the challenges of Class 4.

Main lessons

From the first day in Class 1 the building blocks of writing and numeracy are practised and the early skills of reading, writing and arithmetic are embedded in the world of the Fairy Tales. Rhythmic work is continued from Kindergarten as are other daily, weekly and seasonal rhythmic patterns. Form drawing is worked on in order to develop fine motor skills and spatial awareness. These skills are built upon in Class 2 though the medium of stories from nature, fables and legends and students represent the richness of these in the form of drawings, retelling stories through recall, form drawings and some written work. Numeracy skills are developed through main lesson work using stories alongside active and physical number work in the rhythmic part of the lessons. Children develop their skills during these years from, for example, counting, sequencing and the first stages of mental arithmetic to multiplication and weights and measures in Class 3. In English story telling helps to provide the foundation for an appreciation of language and the oral approach stimulates the child's interest and imagination. Speaking, listening and recitation support the development of writing which is begun in Class 1 and develops through

to Class 3 where children are encouraged to write longer, more complex pieces based around their own experience and the main lesson material.

In Class 3 the main lessons cover many aspects such as Bible stories, house building and farming. Children spend part of their day in the grounds harvesting, juicing, jam and bread making and constructing building projects in order to support their development.

Subject lessons

During these years, subject lessons are gradually introduced covering the following: French and German are introduced early in Class 1. Language learning begins with movement, rhymes, songs, games and imitation of sounds which are designed to engage children without the need for translation or explanation. By Class 3 pupils should have a wide range of vocabulary of everyday things and activities, and be accustomed to using verbs which allow the child to step into the stream of the language

Music begins in Class 1 with singing and flute playing setting the foundations for the higher Classes. By Class 3 music notation is introduced and children are encouraged to choose an instrument for extracurricular learning.

Handwork begins in Class 1 with wool work leading towards basic knitting skills. This is expanded upon in Class 2 with simple crocheting and then in Class 3 the first garments are made to be worn.

The Free Religion lessons start in Class 1 with the aim of exploring the issues of goodness and morality. This is done through festivals and stories, ranging from nature tales to fables to Old Testament stories.

Eurythmy, as an artistic form of movement enabling the child to use their body to express speech and movement, is introduced from the beginning of Class 1.

Lower School – Classes 4 and 5

This is a period when the child separates from his or her surrounding and the 'I-you' polarity strengthens. The child begins to understand and think independently of his or her sense-experiences, to formulate concepts and to classify the world. One sees the child beginning to learn to think and reason logically and showing an eagerness to learn about the world, namely 'this world' versus 'his/her world'.

The child's physical body gains strength and sustained physical effort is possible. Stamina combined with skill evidences itself in beautiful movement, poised between levity and gravity. The transition from early childhood is complete, although the transition into puberty has not usually yet begun. Class 5 stands mid-point between Classes 1 and 8, and midpoint between birth and maturity at the age of 21. In this period the children move from the inherent adoration of the earlier years and unconsciously challenge authority and need to inwardly develop a justified admiration of their teachers.

Teaching needs to change during this period to take into account this process of distancing. Memory is facilitated and built upon by rhythmical presentation of

material, nourishing a newly-matured cardio/vascular interrelationship. The beat of the heart and lung are typically more stable after this age.

The aims and objectives of this period are to build on and develop the basic learning skills (reading, writing, attention, numeracy and social) acquired in Classes 1 to 3 and to develop an independent focus and the beginnings of independent learning. The teaching moves from myth to history – from mythological time to earthly time and to learning the interrelatedness of life through plant, animal and geography.

Main Lessons

The overarching theme of these years is the 'multiplicity of the world'. The natural world is explored through zoology and botany, social pantheistic cosmologies, topography of local surroundings in the details of highs and lows, river courses, coastlines. In numeracy one addresses fluency with whole numbers developing into an understanding of fractions and decimals.

Middle School – Classes 6 to 8

In these years the limbs begin to lengthen and the child starts to experience a 'fall' into gravity. Physiologically, pupils enter into puberty and the first birth pangs of individuality are felt. The child experiences a yearning for independence together with underlying anxiety, emotional vulnerability and mood swings. Authority is openly and critically questioned and parents and teachers are challenged accordingly. In terms of the child's readiness for teaching, one sees the faculties of scientific, abstract, causal thinking come to the fore and the child develops a growing appetite for factual knowledge about the world around them. The child evidences an emerging potential for self-reflection which becomes a new teaching opportunity. During this period the teachers have several key aims and objectives. They need to direct the pupils' interest and attention strongly and to provide the pupils with new perspectives and opportunities to explore different ways of seeing the world. They are called upon increasingly to take greater initiative and responsibility for self-directed learning and individual judgment. Their powers of observation are developed through a variety of media, and work throughout the curriculum cultivates a sense for social responsibility.

The Main Lesson themes are:

The physical sciences: electricity, magnetism, sound, heat and light, followed by simple mechanics and elements of organic chemistry; human science including nutrition, health and hygiene, the organs, bones and muscles. The introduction of geology, astronomy, and regional geography. History: The Romans, The Middle Ages, The Renaissance up to the present day. Maths: alongside continual mental arithmetic there is a focus upon percentages, negative numbers and algebra. English: Writing style and individual creative expression. Art: Black-and-white drawing, perspective and veil painting

Upper School – Classes 9 and 10

It is part of the Upper School task to enable students to acquire differentiated powers of judgment. In Class 9 the education supports the development of practical judgment in a process of expanding horizons brought to the students from a variety of specialist teachers, with subjects often being brought for the first time. In Class 10

the education supports the development of theoretical judgment by enquiry into where things come from (e.g. from myth into literature).

Class 9 is classed as the year of the will where the pupil strives to seek boundaries within contrasting emotions (hate to love, enthusiasm to boredom) in their journey towards independence. Class 9 sees a more contrasting emotional response to life's challenges.

Class 10 is classed as the year of the feeling where one sees a gradual harmonising, objective and critical perspective. Students become self critical and acutely aware of their own and others' weaknesses. Through this year there is a growing ability to focus with clarity upon this issue and with this comes an increasing social awareness and eventually a movement towards greater inner harmony.

The Class 9 teacher is required to provide form through clear and fair processes in order that the middle ground can be firmly held whilst students develop an understanding of the contrasts within their emotional life. Teachers need to engage the students' will and to harness their enthusiasm, through both practical and academic challenges. During this period it is important that students are awakened to the world outside themselves in order to balance their internal turmoil.

In Class 10 the teacher is required to employ great sensitivity and awareness to the intensity of the students' inner journey where, through their feeling life, they can begin to bring balance and harmony. Over time, the processes set for them in Class 9 evolve through debate and discussion, to enable greater scope for students to take responsibility for this form from within. The teaching aims to foster and support this inner journey through a variety of competencies, skills and abilities. In particular, social awareness and increasing self-motivation to enable independent working and learning. Encouragement to be aware of the world beyond them is important in order to find balance with the intensity of their inner life. Students begin to develop structure and a sense for causality in their thinking which becomes increasingly objective. To summarise:

Class 9 Aims

- To develop independence and harness will
- To move towards independent and critical thinking
- To have a responsibility for self-learning and motivation
- To explore the space between the polarities

Class 10 Aims

- To further develop independence and balance
- To find a balance in thinking AND feeling
- To independently meet deadlines and external disciplines

Content

Class 9 and 10 have weekly subject lessons in Eurythmy, Music, Crafts, Free Religion, and Gym and Games. In Class 10, in addition to the Waldorf curriculum students take core GCSEs of English, Maths and Science and then choose other GCSE options usually to a total of 7 or 8 subjects.

In Class 9 the timetable is collapsed for two weeks to enable the students to visit Embercombe, where they experience a rural working retreat. Class 9 Main lesson themes include: Geography (Geomorphology); Physics (heat and light); History of Drama; History of Art (from Ancient Egypt to the Renaissance).

Class 10 Main Lesson themes include: Geography (water & weather systems); English (metrics and poetics); History of Art (from Renaissance to Neo-Classicism)

Class 11 Main Lesson themes include: Biology (Botany); Physics (Waves); Chemistry; Projective Geometry; History of Music; Romanticism (Art and Literature); Parsifal (Arthurian romance); History – Medieval;

Class 12 Main Lesson themes include: European Literature; Architecture; Modern Art & Aesthetics; Bio-Dynamics; Modern History; Human Geography; Astronomy; Philosophy; Biology (Zoology & Embryology) Physics (Goethean Science)

Upper School – Classes 11 and 12

In Class 11 the education serves to support the pupil developing their emotional judgment, emotional intelligence and insight. Students are encouraged to travel beyond the visible and observable phenomena into an examination of ways of thinking about this phenomena thus encouraging and enhancing their powers of imagination. This supports greater harmony within the student as they can stand outside themselves and utilise greater balance and objectivity in their will and feeling life and develop skills in their independent responses to matters such as social tact and taste. In Class 11 greater social responsibility develops and the Social Practical /Industrial Tour enables them to experience the interconnectedness in society with compassion and humility.

In Class 12 students seek an overview in which to reconcile the tension between the needs of individual and global consciousness, and to reveal their own position in the world they are about to encounter. They begin to develop a sense of experiencing an overview of the world and ask what their place in that world will be. The curriculum supports this process and further develops the students' ability to think independently with social responsibility and insight into the implications of judgment.

Class 11 aims

Objectivity in their feeling life in order to bring increasing capacity to form judgments as to their personal taste, style and social awareness.

Self directed sense of social responsibility and an ability to bring together and organise their thinking in a balanced and harmonious understanding of both finite and non-sense perceptible phenomena.

Class 12 aims

Think independently and act from their own insight in an engaged and interested manner that shows good understanding of social responsibility.

Ability to stand independently and attain an overview in a cross-curricular manner, and to form ideas and opinions with creativity and insight.

To develop good levels of social awareness and competence

To stand with confidence and openness in the world to show an awareness of the 'whole' and be able to articulate the ideas that live behind the processes.

Content

The curriculum balances a more traditional Waldorf education with examinations in order that students may move into the world with support for their own development alongside the qualifications that will allow them to journey towards their chosen direction.

Within the Main Lesson programme topics are chosen that support an understanding of the journey from 'what is my question' to 'how may I begin to fulfil that task'? An overview is brought of the relationship of the individual to the world around them through, for example, studying Economics; Politics and Philosophy where through debate and discussion, differing ways of the world may be explored. Students continue their appreciation of the History of Art, English poetry and Music in order to strengthen their cultural and personal understanding of the consciousness of our time. They also develop their scientific and mathematical understanding in order to ensure 'literacy' in all areas of the curriculum.

These skills come to fruition in the major performances of Eurythmy and the Class 12 Play which bring together the social, artistic, creative and performance skills that have developed throughout their education. In addition students continue their Crafts programme through to Class 11 (ceramics, silversmithing, bookbinding and stone carving) alongside Music, Eurythmy and Gym. They also prepare for their yearend Italy Trip through Art study and music in order that they are ready to appreciate the role of the renaissance in the human being and in their own stage of development.

Within the 'qualification' programme students choose from a variety of AS/A2 subjects (currently: English, Maths, Chemistry, Biology, Physics, Geography, History, German, French, Graphic Design, Design, Drama, Art, economics, music and History of Art and an Edexcel Extended project of the student's choice).

Themes common to the whole education

Festivals

Since their inception, Waldorf schools have regarded the celebration of festivals as an integral part of school life. The education has its roots in Western Christian culture and for this reason RSSKL celebrates the Christian festivals, particularly at the cardinal points of the year – Michaelmas, Advent, Easter, Whitsun and Midsummer. These festivals are celebrated by the whole school. There are other festivals – for example, minor Christian ones, festivals from the Celtic tradition, those belonging to the other great religions of the world and children's birthdays - which are also marked by individual classes in different ways. In addition, there are school festivals, where classes share with parents and other classes throughout the school what they have been working on in the classroom.

We celebrate these festivals in order to address the basic human need for rhythm and repetition. The festivals, like nature, give the children an orientation in time, which brings security. In celebrating them, we aim to cultivate feelings of reverence, wonder and anticipation as well as giving nourishment for the soul. The children experience the same festivals again and again, but always from a slightly different

developmental vantage point, meeting something new each time, to help deepen their understanding of the world in which they live.

Several of the festivals are celebrated in the theatre with the whole school present, with the teachers of one or two classes taking responsibility for its organisation. The programme aims to address different age groups with a number of different items: a story for the younger children, an address for the older ones, some Singing, Drama or Eurythmy for everyone. In addition, classes may have prepared one song to sing together as a school. In the more intimate setting of the classroom, children might perform a little play, sing a number of different songs, do some craft work and hear more stories, all as part of the celebration of a festival. As children lose their natural sense of reverence, teachers are challenged to find new, appropriate ways of presenting a festival and in the Upper School students are even encouraged to plan and create a festival together with their teachers.

The questions that need to stay alive are: How can teachers be ever more artistic in their approach? How do they keep the festivals truly alive for older pupils? How do they involve them in the festivals' creation? It is of the utmost importance to remember that the adults - that is, the teachers – seek meaning for themselves in the festivals, and connect to them quite independently, and do not celebrate festivals solely for the sake of the pupils.

Narrative

The use of narrative is a key feature of daily classroom teaching and learning in the Steiner Waldorf tradition. Story, verses, poems and oral presentation appear in many forms and in all subjects across the curriculum. In the Lower School, there are no standard textbooks – it is the teachers who impart new material, orally in the first instance, in their own words.

The Waldorf tradition of reciting story and event enables teachers to tailor their lesson material to meet the needs of their class and the individuals therein. It allows children to understand their world in an age-appropriate manner, while introducing a richness of language, vocabulary and sound. Narrative stimulates listening skills, helping to develop in children their powers of concentration. The development of skills in speaking fosters the child's capacity to think, while a wide range of vocabulary lays the basis for breadth of thought in later years. Through narrative in the curriculum, pupils are exposed to profound truths, awakening feelings of reverence and providing a necessary and healing counterweight to the increasingly powerful effects of today's technological society. The rhythm and repetition inherent in narrated story, poem and verse deeply nourish the inner needs of today's child. For the child approaching puberty, recitation can help to bring clarity and balance. Narrative teaches our children about life – it contains beginnings, evolution, consequences, and outcomes. Sequences convey meaning, crisis reaches resolution, personal experience is highlighted. Listening to and recalling story encourages collaborative learning and a curiosity for the world, while also enabling children to digest their experiences. Conflict, tension, pain, grief, loss, anger – all can be clothed in classroom story, enabling individuals and groups indirectly to come to terms with difficult issues. Indeed, story is often more objective than the direct or moralising approach.

The narrative threads in the curriculum recapitulate the historical development of oral tradition. Thus, Class 1 learns subjects through the context of traditional fairy tales and nature stories - from literacy to numeracy to music and languages; in Class 2, stories of the Saints and fables provide the milieu in which children learn. Each year, the context changes from Bible stories to myths to the history of ancient civilisations, and so on to present day 'history'. This evolution through story mirrors the child's own inner development. Classes are called upon daily to contribute narrative together, in the form of verse and poem. What begins as group narrative develops through the years into individual presentation, from oral project presentations or debates in class, to dramatic performances for other classes and the wider community.

Subjects

English Language and Literature

Through speech we communicate as human beings and understand each other. There are four "channels" through which this can happen: listening and speaking (given) and writing and reading (culturally developed). Advancing the capacity to communicate using these four "channels" is the distinctive domain of English. As a subject, English enhances self-expression in all its forms, thus intrinsically developing self-knowledge. It fosters the ability to understand increasingly sophisticated communication from others, developing the capacity for empathy. A rich orality is modelled by the teacher and fostered in the early years, as an ongoing underlying basis for the gradual transformation into skilful literacy from the age of seven onwards. The use of eloquent speech is felt to be a fundamental element of the pedagogical fostering of the growing human being. The transformation of this potent orality into a structured literacy is the task of education as a whole, and English in particular.

Of course these skills are also fostered in other subjects, particularly the humanities, especially with essay-writing in the upper school, but they are initially the domain of English.

Method and content

Initially, in Class 1, letters of the alphabet are introduced through story and picture. Writing precedes reading, as the children move from recognising what they do in speech, to 'speaking' onto paper. The child's imagination is called upon, and written responses elicited, through stories told with expressive language, carefully selected to mirror the development of the child: nature stories and fairy tales in Class 1; fables in Class 2; Bible stories in Class 3; ancient mythology in Classes 4 and 5; historical biographies in Classes 6, 7 and 8.

Written technique is introduced carefully in terms of child development, and as the servant, not the master, of expression. A continuing feeling for the plasticity and gesture of language is encouraged through active, age-appropriate recitation from Kindergarten to Class 12.

In Classes 9 and 10, the Main Lessons of Metrics and Poetics, from Myth to Literature, History of Art and History of Drama and aim to give the adolescent a comprehensive experience of human cultural expression through the ages, building on the foundation of the class teacher years. In Class 11 and 12 the English

curriculum finds completion in the Main Lessons of Romantic Literature and Parzival and Modern Literature, Modern Art and Aesthetics and Philosophy all of which rely on an ever deeper and more conscious use of language for the development of a fully rounded cultural education.

The main lessons foster a spiral of skills development throughout the Upper School. In Classes 9 and 10, they consolidate technical skills and strengthen the foundations for increasing expressive power. These unfold through Classes 11 and 12, as students deepen their capacity for inward reflection, empathy and creative expression. Electives in advanced level English study, such as English Literature A level, creative writing and poetry in Main Lesson, and independent project writing, further enhance the maturation of skills. The school's overall aim is to enable all our graduates to develop well rounded literacy skills and a vocabulary which is suitable for the modern world in which we live.

History

History is the discipline of studying the past in order to explore our roots and through this to understand the development of both the individual and humanity as a whole. Through making sense of the past we can understand the present and shape the future. Students thus develop key life competencies: judgment, thinking, moral initiative and social awareness.

Method and content

Historical developments are brought in an age-appropriate manner to the pupils/students. In the Lower School, providing the 'seeds', through pictures that are gradually 'awakened' in the Upper School, through revisiting similar content from different perspectives. The teacher brings a 'picture' symptomatic of the underlying forces of history, and utilises a variety of age-appropriate and creative 'tools' to develop this.

- Class 5 - ancient civilizations; opening horizons to understand that every culture has its 'flower' to develop and share.
- Class 6 - from Rome to the Middle Ages; the conflicting role of the individual and the group; relationships between power bases (church/state), people (emperor/Pope) and ideals (service/greed).
- Class 7 - the Renaissance to the 16th century; exploring the individual's creativity in developing our modern world.
- Class 8 - causality is a key theme; studying the American Revolution to present day; what is the impact of the inventions that have shaped the 20th and 21st centuries? What have humans done with these inventions?
- Class 9 - develops the thinking into will; practical judgment asks "what is my point of view, and that of the world?" - I and the other; what ideas and motivating forces live behind the development of modern history, for example, colonialism, nationalism, socialism?
- Class 10 - develops the will into thinking; "where are my roots?" revisiting Class 5 content - ancient civilisations - using a phenomenological approach; key questions explore the human being's relationship with, and attempt to control, his environment and attempts to come to terms with one's mortality.

- Class 11 - develops the will and feeling into thinking; revisiting Class 6 content - Middle Ages - supporting the motif of 'finding one's way'. 'Symptomatic' content brings service and devotion (monks/ warriors); the church and the state (Pope/Emperor); the East/West divide (Islam and Christianity).
- Class 12 - develops individual judgment beyond the personal – 'know who you are'; broad thematic overviews within history.

Geography

The developmental stages of Geography connects the student to the world, beginning with the sense of a world that surrounds the child (but is separate from them), progressing to an ability to identify, analyse, imagine and know this world. This unfolds for students in a way that cultivates awe, respect and responsibility. There is also a strong interrelationship between geography and other aspects of the curriculum. In particular, science and history where for example, relative distribution of resources and ease or difficulty of travel have been major influences in the unfolding of history and patterns of land-use, population and politics have had a significant impact on the world's changing geography.

Method and content

Geography has three fundamental themes: physical geography; social geography and inner geography. The core methodology is to work from the whole to the inter-related parts and to start in the child's known world and travel to the unknown and then back again. Children start with their surroundings – one's bedroom, the family home, the common classroom - and learn to describe, define, measure, map and draw from their observations. In an organic sequence, this expands into local community, region, country, continent and finally the world and then beyond and below into the climate and the geology. The material is presented and explored with a graduated training in skills, knowledge and appreciation. The scope of what is covered at what age is determined by a slowly expanding horizon, carefully matching and nurturing the child's growing awareness of the world around them, beginning with the immediate, local and familiar in Class 1, and culminating in a Planetary perspective, with some understanding of global systems in Class 8. Within this there is also a growing understanding of the economy of human life - how we meet our material needs, and the growth of society and trade.

In the Upper School this development continues through Main Lessons in ecology and the sciences through to philosophy in Class 12.

- Classes 1 & 2 - general study of nature and the seasons.
- Class 3 - farming and building main-lessons as well as gardening allow the children to learn how people and the land have a creative and fruitful relationship, giving them an appreciation of the resources of nature and how the land is cultivated, as well as practical skills.
- Class 4 expands the horizon to regional geography, explored through walks and maps; establishing basic skills of map reading and reading the land, as well as imagining each from the other. Themes include variation in landscape features and how local ways of life have changed over time.

- Class 5 - geography of the UK is explored through the physical, cultural and political, particularly learning about the interplay between history and geography and the lifestyle imposed by the land.
- Class 6 - European geography, physical, cultural and historical, especially considering the migration of peoples, interchanging and expanding with the rise and fall of the Roman Empire. Geology - seeing the inside story, plate tectonics, reflecting the child's inner turmoil on the eve of adolescence; this usually includes a geological field trip.
- Class 7 - world geography: continents, oceans, climate zones, latitude, cultural specializations.
- Class 8 – the aim is a rounded understanding of the world as a whole - physical, political, cultural, climatologically and geological. In the Upper School, Geography is offered as an option among the GCSE and A level subjects and Geography Main Lessons are being explored in order to bring the teaching of this subject to fruition.

In the Upper School, Geography Main Lesson is often taught by a visiting specialist. In Classes 9 & 10 the pupils study Physical Geography – beginning with Geomorphology and the formation of the earth and its topographical forms, and moving on to current of water and weather, including their impact on the environment. In Class 12 the emphasis is on the social and political implications of Human Geography related issues, like population pressures, access to water and the exploitation of natural resources.

Science

Science is about understanding and discovering the material world around us: nature, life, our bodies and health, the earth, the universe. It is about clear logical reasoning, as in Maths, but tied to clear objective observation and measurement, and applied to the world around us. In Science, authority and dogma must be subservient to the evidence in nature. Theories are just that – the best way we have of understanding things at the moment, but our thinking may have to change as new evidence emerges. Our ideas have to be left loose enough to grow and change. We need to appreciate the value - and limits - of scientific method: a perpetual cycle of observation, hypothesis, experimentation and refinement, with an emphasis on accurate measurement, 'fair tests', controlled variables, repeatability and peer-review.

The study of Science is about developing an understanding of how things behave, which allows us to make predictions. This, in turn, is crucial in understanding technology, farming and health, and critical to invention and innovation in those fields. This is especially important for scientific literacy – the ability to understand and participate in current, and future, scientific debates, such as stem-cell research or climate change. In a broader sense, understanding the growth and development of scientific ideas and methods is important to understanding human development through history. So, too, is an understanding of how beliefs, social mores and scientific ideas have mutually shaped each other - and continue to do so. Science is not separate from society, for all its efforts at objectivity.

Method and content

The approach to Science begins with observing phenomena, savouring a sense of wonder before seeking an explanation. Science begins in Kindergarten, with walks in the 'natural world', observing and gathering the wonder and beauty of nature through the seasons. Baking, painting, playing with water and mud, among many other activities, provide experiences and unconscious observations which can later be drawn on.

- In Classes 1&2 the 'home surroundings' strand continues, with nature walks and nature stories, through crafts, and the child's increasing awareness of their body in movement.
- In Class 3 the child experiences the 'rubicon', a major transition, developing an awareness of time and of material needs; this is met through main lessons on building/shelter and farming/food, with many opportunities for practical experience and basic understanding of simple mechanics and biology.
- In Classes 4 to 6 the emphasis shifts to include more and more of the natural world; from Man and Animal, to the plant kingdom to geology, from the more familiar and similar (to humans) to things which are increasingly removed.

More formal science begins with physics main-lessons starting in Class 6 and chemistry starting in Class 7, whilst the life-science strand returns to health, reproduction, anatomy and the senses. From Class 6 to Class 10 there are generally 3 science main-lesson blocks each year. In Class 9 weekly science subject lessons begin, with an emphasis on understanding the basics of scientific method, laboratory practice and safety, with some key aspects of physics and chemistry.

In Class 10 and 11, science as a GCSE subject is compulsory, providing a good understanding of a broad range of Science. In addition Main Lessons are taught in Biology, Ecology, Physics (power and transport) and Chemistry (carbon), following themes brought in an age appropriate manner supporting the inner turmoil and impatience of the 14-15-year-old and holding the constancy of scientific processes to support their balance. Class 10 main lessons answer the key questions of 'How did I get here?' 'Who am I and where am I from?' A-level science is optional in Classes 11 and 12.

We currently have only one Science Main Lesson block in Class 11: Botany and one short block in Class 12: Embryology and Zoology.

Mathematics

Mathematical literacy is as important to the growth of the human being as is literacy in the mother tongue. Through mathematics one has an alternative language with which to relate to and understand the world in terms of Science, Nature, Art and Music. It is important to bring, in the education of a child, both the utility and the beauty of the language of Maths. Mathematics is a subject that directly fosters the will activity and encourages independence of learning.

Method and Content

Mathematics is broadly divided into three stages:

1. Classes 1-5 – the subject is developed as an activity that connects to the direct experiences of the child – from the internal to the external.
2. Classes 6-8 – the approach in these years concentrates on the practical.
3. Classes 9-12 - Maths moves towards a more abstract perspective.

In Classes 1-3 simple arithmetic is initially experienced through counting, sharing and combining real objects and through movement exercises (dancing the sums, rhythmic counting). The four processes (+, -, \times , \div) are used in solving practical questions. Number games and puzzles keep the mental activity lively, with lots of mental arithmetic involved in playing shops and actually giving change, not only written calculations. Main Lessons on weights and measurements involve much practical activity linked with farming and building. Through form drawing Geometry has a free-hand beginning with much copying and transforming simple forms. The qualities of various forms experienced as movement leads to an understanding for mirroring, translating or transforming two-dimensional geometric forms.

In Class 4 the curriculum reflects the nine year old change and as the child starts to distinguish themselves more from the world around them, many lessons - such as grammar - focus on the fragmentation of the whole.

Class 5 we introduce the more abstract decimal fractions. Geometry continues to progress from earlier form drawing but is still based on skilled drawing without instruments. The vigorous experience of Maths is felt to be as important as quick abstract mental calculation, and both are practised.

In Classes 6-8 the earlier body movement-based experience of Maths processes evolves. The 12 year olds internalise what they have learned so far, through the vigorous experience of internal logic. Algebra is introduced and children learn that, just as they gradually stopped using objects in calculations in Class 1, they can gradually stop using numbers in mathematics by making intelligible the formal processes. Conceptual thinking emerges from the earlier aim of keeping thinking based on movement and imagination. In Geometry, the experience of geometrical proof also helps to facilitate this change. When suitably presented, mathematics can offer an important support to the inner life of children at this age. They can gain rigorous objectivity to balance the changes during puberty and a real trust in the value of thinking.

In Class 9 students experience through the Golden Ratio that nature, Art, science and music have an underlying unity. Students own research and ideas are developed through project work and inquiry providing constancy and structure within their inner turmoil.

In Class 10 students are brought trigonometry which emphasises concepts and analysis brought to us by the Greeks. Students can literally 'look out' and see a world beyond that supports their journey and understanding of who they are and where have they come from.

In Class 11 projective Geometry is taught, emphasising ideas of infinity, duality and continuity and the synthesis between them. This supports the balance and reflection of this developmental stage. Students take GCSE Maths in Class 9/10 as one of their compulsory subjects and it is open to them to pursue these studies at AS/A2 level should they wish.

Information and Communication Technology

Steiner Waldorf Education prepares young people for life in the modern world and to enable this to happen the education supports the development of the child in their healthy growth. To introduce a subject like ICT too early into the child's development has several difficulties among which are: a tendency to become fixed by the medium, with the result that their innate creativity is hampered, compromised or constricted, harmful effects on brain development diversion of time from more direct and hands-on skills which foster essential hand-eye-brain coordination and development; use of a 'tool' that has an abstraction beyond the comprehension of the growing child that opens them to areas of social questions that are beyond their understanding social isolation. We embrace ICT with all it offers as a valuable and necessary tool in a busy world with diminishing resources. ICT has become a part of everyday life and our curriculum is continually adapting to meet these needs both from a technical and moral/social perspective.

We introduce ICT in Class 8 when the students have begun to develop the ability to reason logically, and when the software will resemble that which they will be using in their adult life. ICT draws and builds on skills of literacy, problem-solving, judgment and creativity developed through Classes 1-7 and these skills continue to be more consciously developed through ICT. It is crucial that students are presented with a sound understanding of the computer as a tool, with its related advantages and disadvantages and are introduced to the social issues surrounding the use of technology in our changing world. The basic skills are easily and quickly learned and, as the technology and software are rapidly changing, ICT is introduced at the stage that students are ready, developmentally, to use ICT as a tool that supports their learning and serve their education. To this end the ultimate aim is to equip the students to be able to make judgments for themselves how best to use the computer, as a tool in the service of real perceived needs.

Method and content

Students are formally introduced to ICT within the school in Class 9, with a weekly 'subject-lesson'. This is the modern equivalent of the 'touch-typing' lessons of the original Waldorf curriculum which remains a valuable tool in computer use. Students learn about E-Safety, use of Office software, use of creative software and computer science, including computer programming. It is vital that young people have at least a basic understanding of how any technology they use works which supports the methodology of the 'whole to the part'. Throughout their time in the Upper School students develop and are encouraged to use their ICT skills. This manifests itself in many different ways: exam board interactive programmes and the use of virtual learning environments' Laptops in Classrooms for note taking and controlled assignment work. Students complete extended project work and portfolio work which utilise and extend student ICT skills through desk top publishing, and taking

and editing digital photographs. GCSE Computing as part of the Class 10/11 programme, content includes computer systems and programming, a practical investigation and a programming project. Students learn about the fundamentals of computer systems, computing hardware, software, representations of data in computer systems, computer communications and networking and computing programming.

Gym and Games

The way in which each one of us inhabits our body is of great importance - we can express our talents and intentions better if we attain a focused presence. Physical education assists the development of the child's sense of movement, spatial awareness, sense of balance and inner equilibrium, as well as the sense of bodily well-being, through fine and gross motor control. It is considered integral to the whole school curriculum. The aim is to teach not only practical skills, but to cultivate social inclusion, spatial awareness, self-motivation and full participation in all activities, in an age-appropriate way. One of the principles of Gym and Games is that we view sport an activity for older children, and play as a child's activity. Play has been described many times by developmental psychologists as the 'work' of small children. It allows them to develop physical and social skills in a creative way. Imaginative games with the 'rules' rising naturally out of the story-image allow many different skills to be worked on in manageable ways; so that by the time they come to formal sports they have the necessary skills and co-ordination in place. Sport is highly structured with many abstract rules, and because of its stress on competition it is rarely the best means of learning the many skills required to play it well. Hence we find it better not to introduce formal sports too early. With the right preparation however, our students can really excel in sports, and even the less 'sporty' can feel included and enjoy the experience as well as learning to take pleasure in movement itself.

Method and content

Learning progresses from the healthy movements learnt through play, into the necessary skills that adolescents need for playing sports. An imagination of a physical action occurs before the actual movement is carried out. Our teaching method therefore requires that the children are given age-appropriate pictures as an impulse to movement or activity. We believe that competition is a vital educational tool but should not be the main driving forces for teaching children games. This allows younger children to participate fully in lessons without the pressures of sport. Children can participate in inter-school competitions and we succeed particularly in basketball and volleyball. The school produces some excellent athletes, although this is not our primary aim. Timetabled lessons are complemented by a wide range of appropriate games, activities, sports and after-school clubs.

Method and content

In Classes 1 and 2 games are taught by the Class teacher, very much through story images. The gymnastics curriculum begins in Class 3 with creative jungle gyms, whereby the equipment becomes, for example, vines over swamps, rocks behind waterfalls, hippopotamuses! The children are adventurers travelling carefully through

the jungle. 'Foxes and Rabbits', 'Wild Aquarium' and 'Storm the Castle' are some of the social, energetic, imaginative and playful games in which the children take part from Classes 3 to 6.

Sports-style games begin in Class 7. A full range of competitive sports is taught from Class 8 onwards. These include: badminton, basketball, hockey, football, softball, volleyball and ultimate frisbee. Athletics and gymnastics complement the curriculum.

Music

Music is a universal language and one which everybody has a relationship to. It is social Art and the emphasis on learning Music in the Waldorf curriculum equips children not only with the technical skills needed to make music with others, but also with many valuable life skills, such as: the ability to listen inwardly and to each other; the capacity for empathy and the possibility for self expression. Through music there is a constant schooling of discipline, imagination and nurturing of the soul.

Method and content

In the Early Years Music is not taught formally as a separate subject, but instead is incorporated in aural learning through imitation into the children's daily and yearly rhythms of festivals, plays, dances and walks. They live in the realm of the pentatone in Music as appropriate for their stage of development. During the course of the Lower and Middle School, children emerge from the natural but unconscious musicians that they are, and begin to formally work with the language and theory of music in written form, from rounds, through two part harmonies culminating in four-parts by Class 8. Just as the Geography Curriculum takes the children gradually further out into the world through the course of the Lower and Middle school, so does the breadth of musical style and influence, reaching the cultures of Africa and the Americas by Class 8. In the Upper School the theoretical language of music is now used as a useful tool which underpins the journey through Western music history, from the Baroque to the present day. Their knowledge enables them to identify features and forms, respond to the variety of moods, listen with real focus, compose examples in certain styles and later analyse and criticise the works themselves, all the while expanding their recognition and understanding of different styles and composers with the social-economic influences on their lives and work. They continue to broaden their singing repertoire in Class and in choir, culminating in 'A Cappella' singing in four parts in Class 12. Throughout their schooling there are sharing and later performing opportunities to bring their musical work to fruition, true musical goals for all.

Eurythmy

Eurythmy is an Art of movement in which the performer expresses speech or music through specific gestures. These movements arise from Rudolf Steiner's deep understanding of our connection to language and music. Learning to speak, expressing our thoughts and feelings through language and responding to music in myriad ways, are fundamental human experiences. Eurythmy arises out of these experiences and expresses the characteristic qualities of language and music through gesture. The gestures reveal the essential quality of each sound of speech

or tone or interval. When the first Waldorf school was founded in 1919, Rudolf Steiner included Eurythmy as part of the core curriculum, believing this new Art of movement to be an invaluable asset in the education of the child. Eurythmy allows the growing person to express music or poetry not just with the voice but with his or her whole being. This learning by heart to 'sing' a poem or a melody with one's body right through to toes and fingertips has a powerful effect on the developing child. This 'moving with meaning' works deeply on us in a wholesome way.

Method and content

In the Early Years, children imitate naturally and follow the Eurythmy teacher acting out a fairy tale. Moving in a large variety of ways, such as skipping princesses or stamping giants, the children strengthen their balance, agility and co-ordination, mastering their young bodies through this imaginative play. In the Lower School years, there are many excellent exercises which help develop spatial awareness and social awareness. Children develop a vocabulary of gesture and forms. They are further supported by the Eurythmy lesson taking its themes from the main lesson, such as fables in Class 2 or ballads in Class 7. In the Upper School, students revisit all that has so far been learned more or less unconsciously, taking it to a deeper and more conscious level. A Class 10 Eurythmy lesson might seem more like English literature on occasion, when aspects of the style of a poem are considered before students are guided towards creating their own choreography for it. The Eurythmy curriculum concludes in Class 12 with a major production of a complex music piece and a fairy tale or legend performed entirely in Eurythmy. This can last up to an hour, bringing together all the skills and elements the students have learned over the years. With a professional standard of costume, lighting, live music and a lengthy rehearsal period, these performances are a worthy culmination of the students' Eurythmy studies in the school.

Foreign Languages

Learning a foreign language has an obvious utilitarian perspective. However, as with other aspects of our curriculum, the process of learning is often as important as the content, and many other important skills are developed through the medium of foreign languages, besides the obvious aim of improving one's ability to get by in a different culture. When considering language learning, it is helpful to consider child development and the acquisition of general human faculties in the process of growing up. We all go through major developmental stages early in life when we rise from crawling to walking, from walking to talking and from talking to thinking. Much of what we are able to do in later life depends on these early achievements – each milestone being a foundation for the next. One could say that speech is internalised movement, and that thinking is internalised speech. For the growing child, it can therefore be a blessing to go through these processes again and strengthen the acquired faculties by learning not one but two new languages. A second major benefit of learning foreign languages from early childhood is that one can gain access to other cultures through the power of empathy which is developed by learning that when a German sees a tree, the experience is '*Baum*' and when a Frenchman sees a tree, the experience is '*arbre*'. *Baum* and *arbre* are very different gateways to the experience of the phenomenon of the tree - and we are enriched by this exposure. This way of learning provides alternative ways of

experiencing the world, creating thereby a greater interest in the world. Learning a new language enhances our sensitivity to language as a whole. With this comes a greater capacity to form judgments, to be flexible and mobile in one's thinking, and to take an interest in the world that is revealed through language. Languages are introduced very early in Steiner schools, a practice established long before psychological developmental studies highlighted the greater capacity for language acquisition of young children, which is lost as they get older, primarily because it is a highly imitative process at first, and that is entirely appropriate for early-years learning.

Method and content

Specific content during the Lower and Middle school will tend to reflect the age-specific themes of the main-lessons and the ideas (such as parts of speech or tenses) being developed in English lessons. Following the archetypal experience, language is first learned orally and in context. The young child learns through songs, games and basic instructions on moving about in the classroom. Over the first three years, a rich vocabulary is acquired more or less unconsciously: numbers, colours, days, months, clothes, parts of the body, the weather, life on the farm and more. Then gradually, just as in Class 1 with English, these effortlessly-mastered sounds find form in the written symbol. A beautiful book can be produced with their repertoire of German or French. Then, and only then, does reading begin and the transition is made in Class 5 or 6 to the printed word. In the upper school, from Class 9 onwards, students choosing to pursue the study of languages can start a new journey, going deeply into that language and culture through literature (both classic and contemporary), music, films and current affairs, among other topics. In the process they acquire high skills, both oral and written, and by the end of the journey they are able to express in very rich language their thoughts and reflections on every aspect of the foreign culture they have made their own. Meanwhile they will have gained GCSE and A level qualifications.

Drama

Drama is a central part of the school curriculum from Kindergarten to Class 12. In the beginning drama enhances, through what appears to be play, a deepening of the soul gestures the archetypes introduced through the fairy tales. As the child moves through the Lower School the themes that resonate throughout the curriculum are again deepened and revisited through Drama. As the children grow, so their performances are introduced to the parents, the Lower School, the whole school and finally to the wider community. Each new threshold brings new skills and competencies to the child and the social group. Through Drama the child/student is supported in: experiencing the transformative power of Artistic process gaining social benefits from team work Being enriched culturally by the content.

Method and content

Kindergarten and Class 1 children are encouraged to play in a natural way, putting on a crown or a cloak and simply becoming a king, queen or witch, often inspired by story time. The archetypal characters narrated in the stories come to life through drama and live deeply within the child's soul. In Classes 2 to 5, short plays are drawn

from the Main Lesson curriculum (saint stories, Native Americans, Norse mythology, India and Gilgamesh); pupils enact various parts, generally known by the whole class and interchangeable, strongly supported by their peers; recitation is often done in chorus. In addition, foreign language plays foster fluency in oral work and a sense for the culture of the country. In Classes 6 to 8, skills in music, singing, speech, Artwork and movement are worked on, culminating in a full length public production for Class 8 pupils. The content in these years ranges from Rome to exploration to Shakespeare and the Industrial Revolution. Classes 9 and 10 work with masks, movement, mime, improvisation and dance; they perform short plays and may take up small parts in a Midsummer production alongside Classes 11 and 12. Classes 11 and 12 work towards mastering the dramatic process, setting high standards, and creating a company spirit; study the chosen Class 12 play and become involved in set and costume design, music and lighting; are encouraged to discuss the meaning of the play, its heartbeat, its plot and how to bring these alive for an audience; are guided through the emotional journey of a major production, becoming socially aware of each other's transformation as actors and human beings.

Art

When practising Artistic activities children experience their own soul realm, thus Art lives within every lesson in a variety of forms from both the actual activity of painting and drawing to the Artistic expression of the teacher in the wider realm. Steiner viewed the value of Art for children in the following way: *"... it is Art that awakens their intelligence to life.If children are taught to comprehend things in a living way they become 'able' people, children who engage in Art learn to be creative people..... However clumsily a child ...paints, this activity awakens inner soul forces."* Painting and drawing is integrated into the main lesson from Class 1 and thus remains, on the whole, the domain of the class teacher from Class 1-8. In the Upper School painting and drawing comes through lessons in Class 9 on Black and White Drawing and in painting lessons in Class 10. In the Upper School they are taught by specialist teachers rather than a class teacher. In addition, in the Upper School the Arts programme is supported by the complementary role of the Craft programme.

Method and content

Classes 1 to 2 – wet-on-wet painting, with imaginative colour stories; simple modelling exercises; regular drawing of motifs from fairy tales, nature stories, fables and legends Classes 3 to 5 - form arises out of colour; motifs are taken from Main Lessons, for example, animals, plants, stories; tertiary colours are gradually introduced Classes 6 to 8 - the introduction of veil painting; colour and linear perspective; black and white drawing, using charcoal; introduction of pastels Classes 9 to 10 - The Natural World; learning to see, mainly observational focusing on process, media and technique; deepening colour modulation and dynamics; project-based producing a 'body of work' that is structured and self-managed; encompassing the Ancients and the Renaissance Classes 11 to 12 - Romanticism, analysis, developing independence, increasing breadth at first and depth, originality and mature work. Teaching becomes facilitating, a one-to-one need-to-know basis in terms of techniques; academic input; a collaboration; individual thinking, motivation, demonstrating a comprehension that is broad yet contemporary

Handwork and Crafts

Learning through doing is at the core of the Waldorf curriculum. Practical work stems from the emerging will forces that are nurtured by imitation in the Early Years. All practical work throughout the following years follows this core ethos of watching, imitating/copying, learning, doing and finally understanding. 'I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand' - from an old Chinese saying, but still most relevant to the way practical work is learnt today. Handwork lessons are more than a means of promoting dexterity and skill. Working with the hands, through rhythmically repeated movements and exercises while working on tasks suited to the age of the children, helps to bring about both a strengthening of the will and of the capacity for logical thinking. Through this work we also aim to foster a social awareness; to value the work of other people.

Method and Content

Classes 1-7: Handwork is taught. The formative qualities of above/below, heavy/light, light/dark, and inside/outside form the basis of the work. All the tasks are done not for their own sake, but in order to develop the capacities of the children. A workshop atmosphere is encouraged to create an environment that will enable creativity and a joy for the work. Projects always have a practical purpose and aim to be aesthetically pleasing. The curriculum is age-appropriate and builds on the skills of the children as they grow. In Class 1, children start to learn knitting and basic sewing skills on felt, progressing to Class 7 when pupils learn to use a sewing machine. Along the way, they learn such skills as crochet, cross-stitch and creating felt animals from their own patterns.

From Class 9 onwards Handwork gives way to Craft lessons. They are taught in small groups on a rotational basis. In Class 12 there is a stone carving main lesson. As students mature and develop through the teenage years, the materials they engage with become harder and denser. Skills and techniques needed to master these materials grow in complexity. With metalwork, heat is one of the added elements; in joinery precise working, additional specialist tools; in basket weaving, fine hand dexterity skills and coordination are developed.

Class 8: In basket weaving, students are introduced to form and they shape objects and baskets into all shapes and sizes.

Class 9: In this, the year of will, the Crafts focus on a progression of skills and techniques: Black & White Drawing fosters an understanding of polarities - right and wrong, light and dark - which are at the heart of this age. In ceramics students produce functional works, employing techniques including pinch forming, coil building, soft slabbing, press moulds, throwing on the wheel and using glazes and metal oxides. Willow is used in basket weaving, a harder material than cane, helping to develop a stronger hand-eye coordination. In joinery, skills progress through the learning and making of more difficult joints and the making of various items. Copper work continues in metalwork, a test of perseverance and will in the raising of a vase from a flat disc of copper. Metalwork techniques experimented with include: casting tin into a hollow, blocking and clamming copper discs into concave forms, the

rhythmic beating of copper using a planishing hammer for a beautiful even finish. Students then move onto forge work for a different approach.

In Class 10 and 11, GCSE Art & Design is part of the programme. This includes specialism in painting and drawing, photography, metalwork and ceramics. The assessment criterion focuses on development of ideas, experimentation, recording and presentation of a final outcome.

Gardening

Gardening as a specialist subject appears first in Class 6, and continues in Classes 7 and 8. The children have, however, been exposed to it from the very beginning, in the wider educational context of 'learning through doing'. Gardening needs to be experienced as a realm with its own laws and complexities, skills and techniques. Active work with nature challenges the pupil to work with the cycle of the year, long periods between cause and effect, and to appreciate the scale of these natural processes. The children gather experiences into their feeling life, and engage practically with issues such as sustainability, food production, re-cycling and biodegradability - laying the foundation for a practical sense of responsibility.

Method and Content

In Class 3, with the Main Lesson focus on farming, building, measurement and weight the outdoor environment receives special focus.

In Class 6, on the cusp of puberty, the children are experiencing a development of their muscular system that allows physical work to be done in a new way. Gardening offers the opportunity to ally this to their feeling of greater responsibility, and their understanding of nature, which has been cultivated since the early school years. The Class grows a garden based on vegetables they choose, into which they have integrated flowers and herbs. All the basic tool use and garden skills are learned: land preparation, seed sowing and transplanting, making different composts, plant identification, weeding and hoeing, care for the growing plants and harvesting. Gardening also includes a substantial element of forestry work over the winter months, when pupils clear rhododendron bushes, practise coppicing and thin self-sown birch and sycamore, learning the tools and techniques associated with this. New trees are grown and planted on the estate to enhance and diversify the school woodlands.

In Class 7, these skills are practised further, and a new garden is planned and grown in the light of their experience. The pupils now raise large numbers of plants in the potting shed, and have a greenhouse for growing tender crops. They are introduced to the pruning and care of the fruit bushes, which they will harvest and enjoy. A greater emphasis is placed on independent work. The forestry work leads into the introduction of green wood work, where tool handles, gates, trellises and fencing are made.

Gardening can also support, experientially, a range of Middle School Main Lessons. These include the practical application in Class 5 of Botany; Geology and soil formation in Class 6; Chemistry (in composts), Astronomy, Nutrition (food), and the explorers (new food plants) in Classes 7 and 8. In Class 8, the pupils have the opportunity to practise their skills in the collaborative design and creation of a new

garden, based on flowers, and using only local materials. The pupils raise all the plants, and construct all the features according to their own ideas. The process is reviewed by the class at the end of the year. In Class 8, the forestry work leads on to use of the pole lathe and wood turning. Firewood to heat the classroom is prepared.

In the Upper School this links back to Class 3 as seen through the development of Class 9 projects, Class 10 Work Experience and Class 11 Social Practical. Finally in Class 12 the pupils will spend some time exploring the links between Astronomy and Bio-Dynamic Gardening, as well as learn the basic principles of Bio-Dynamics, including how to make a BD compost and a BD preparation.

History of Art

As well as introducing pupils to this vast and culturally rich discipline which combines art, architecture, history, and aesthetics, and to leave pupils with a lasting appreciation of great works of art and architecture, there is also a strong emphasis on what may be called 'beauty' in these Upper School Main Lessons,. Every effort is made to help pupils to understand works of art and the ways in which they can convey meaning and to provide pupils with a vocabulary to describe and reflect works of art and architecture (such as: composition, form, structure, line, colour, tone, and modelling, etc.). There are many connections between History of Art other areas of the Upper School curriculum; mainly with History, English, Art and Drama; but also with Physics (engineering), Maths (the Golden Ratio), Chemistry (the properties of pigments and stones) and Biology (esp. anatomy). These kinds of links are often of great interest to pupils.

Method and Content

In Class 9 we introduce pupils to Western art and architecture from the period of Ancient Egypt (c.2750 B.C.) up to the Renaissance (c.1500). In Class 10 we explore the period from the European Renaissance to the late 18th century and in Class 11 we combine the study of Art History with that of Literature by focussing on the Romantic of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Finally, in Class 12 we try to bring the curriculum up to date with the study of art and aesthetics from the period c.1850 to the present. By Class 12 we aim to have helped pupils to understand more explicitly the development of art and its link to the evolution of human consciousness i.e. what art and architecture tells us about the development of human beings.

We proceed in lessons by looking at slides as a whole class, prompted by questions from the teacher. Pupils are initially encouraged to respond orally. The following day pupils will recall the slides, as well as the comments made about them as they attempt to draw some conclusions from their study (memory and deduction). This is followed by the writing up of these observations and comments (supported with board work) for presentation the next day i.e. as homework, usually directly into a Main Lesson book. In these Main Lesson pupils are encouraged and guided to produce artistically lettered titles and to lay out pages of work in a balanced, composed and artistic way. Their writing will be interspersed with their own drawings, which are completed under close instruction from the art teacher for 40-50 minutes every other day. Pupils will be introduced to a variety of media and of

methods of working, such as: detailed representation; gestural drawing; colour modelling; pen drawing; pencil drawing; charcoal drawing; squared drawing; drawing negative shapes and focusing on the use of pattern and embellishment.

Religion

The first Steiner School allowed space during school time for Religion lessons to take place. These lessons were given by different priests from different denominations in the church. Subsequently, at the request of some non-denominational but religiously-inclined parents, the so called 'Free' Religion lessons were introduced. What we have today in Steiner schools is the legacy of this 'Free' Religion lesson. One could argue that, especially in the Lower School, the entire curriculum is religious. So why have Religion lessons? At a time when fewer and fewer people go to church, the Religion lessons provide a regular time and space when deeper questions about the spiritual nature of the human being can be addressed, reflected on and discussed. In the Lower School, these questions remain largely unconscious of course, but the mood that is created in these lessons will help to engender the right mood in the Religion lessons later on. In the Middle and Upper School, when a child's natural feeling for reverence has been lost, Religion lessons help to foster a respect for religions and cultures, and an understanding for others which can act as a positive counterbalance to the adolescent's natural self-centredness. This is perhaps its foremost objective in our time.

The great question for Religion teachers in our school today is: how do we teach this subject in such a way that we do not preach or try to indoctrinate, and yet allow ourselves to speak freely, honestly and openly about how we teachers perceive the world?

Method and content

Always bearing in mind our understanding of child development, we bring the younger children stories where reverence and love for the created world, both visible and invisible, are at the heart of the lesson. A little later on, as children lose their innate confidence in the spiritual world, they are told stories where great courage and faith play their part.

In Class 6, when children begin to develop a more objective and critical view of the world, the New Testament is brought and shared. This is a time when discussions begin. The five pillars of Islam are looked at and some of the Koran is read, in greater detail than is possible during Main Lesson. The positive aspects of both Christianity and Islam are discussed. The mood in these lessons is, above all, one of respect, a respect for the history and cultures that were formed as a result of that religion. There is an attempt to understand what others believe, even if one chooses not to believe it oneself.

In Classes 7 and 8, biographies are often brought, of individuals who have overcome huge obstacles in their lives, through determination, courage and faith.

In the Upper School, social and moral questions continue to be raised and discussed. These can come out of stories in the news, from magazine Articles or books. The question may also be asked whether religion as practised in the past still has relevance today. At the heart of these discussions is the spoken or unspoken

question about the spiritual nature of the human being. Teaching Religion is about kindling and keeping alive a spiritual flame in each pupil, which may or may not grow in freedom, later in life.

Careers Guidance & Work Experience at RSSKL

In order to ensure that timely information is made available to all students in the Upper School regarding examination subject choices that will have a direct influence on what post-school courses and career paths will be open to them, all students in Classes 9 to 11 have individual meetings with the Careers Co-ordinator. Thereafter, meetings will be available by arrangement, as and when needed by individuals.

Furthermore, parents are very welcome to arrange individual meetings with the Careers Co-ordinator, at which the emphasis will be on enabling students to take ownership of their progression through the Upper School and beyond.

The aim is to champion the aspirations of individuals whilst enabling them to access factual information that will allow them, in consultation with teachers and parents, to make informed choices and set themselves achievable goals that take into account their abilities, current attainment levels and the amount of time left at school. Free **impartial** advice is readily available to all students through Youth Connexions. Please visit their website, www.youthconnexions-hertfordshire.org to locate their centres across the county.

Work Experience occurs in the Upper School in years nine and ten. In Class 9 students are allocated slots to help across departments within our school. In Class 10 small groups provide 'Community Service' to establishments such as schools for children with special needs. This has proved to be of great value to all parties and valuable preparation for the individual one-week Work Experience placement. Individual Class 10 Work Experience placements are provided through Youth Connexions who ensures that students have a meaningful, safe and well-planned week with a local business, school or charity. References from these placements often enable students to gain part-time or holiday work. In Classes 11 and 12 students are encouraged to find their own work experience in the holidays with the consent of their parents or guardian. Where this is in a field related to the student's intended course of study or career, so much the better, however, almost any work or volunteering is to be encouraged where this demonstrates a genuine interest, a willingness to develop new skills or take on responsibility. We also regularly invite professions into the school to support the curriculum.

