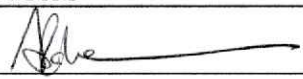


CURRICULUM POLICY

Reviewed by:	Gabriele Woelfle
	Angela Rynne
Date:	May 2023
Next review:	May 2024
Related policies and documents:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum Policy • Children with English as an Additional Language Policy • Key Person and Settling In Policy • Special Educational Needs Policy and Procedure • Transition Policy • British Values Policy
Endorsement	
Full endorsement is given to this policy by:	
Name:	Andaleeb Richards
Position:	North London Rudolf Steiner School Trustee
Signed:	
Date:	17.7.23

The educational principles of the school's Kindergarten curriculum.

Our school is a Steiner Waldorf Kindergarten focusing on education for children from birth to six years. The curriculum is based on an understanding of the nature and development of the young child, which is informed by the insights of Rudolf Steiner. It also takes into account the statutory requirements and guidelines of the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework (EYFS) and the Independent School Standards. Exemptions and modifications to certain of the EYFS Learning and Development requirements have been granted to the school. Our curriculum also supports the development of fundamental British values.

Our curriculum embodies the following educational principles:

Developmental appropriateness, meeting the individual needs of the child, learning from life for life, the vital role of social education, protection of the senses, the importance of rhythm, and space and time for play.

Developmental appropriateness

The aim of our school is to provide a safe, homely environment where children feel confident in their own unique abilities and where each child's stage of development is recognised and supported. The first 7 years of childhood is the period of greatest physical growth and a time when the structures in the brain are still being formed and refined. In Kindergarten we recognise that the young child's primary modes of learning are through moving, doing, experiencing and imitating. We provide nourishing opportunities for children to learn experientially and feel the joy of discovery. The young child's natural creativity, curiosity and sense of wonder, qualities essential for life-long learning, are fostered through a curriculum rich in natural, imaginative content.

Our Kindergarten curriculum lays the foundations for literacy through a rich linguistic environment and responsive interactions which develop vocabulary, understanding, and spoken language.

Our curriculum also provides a secure basis for the development of children's mathematical understanding through practical experiences, problem solving and targeted activities.

Learning from life for life

Our Kindergarten activities are meaningful for young children and related to daily life, the world around us and seasonal change. They are planned to promote integrated learning across the different areas of the curriculum. A kindergarten child experiences a rich variety of learning situations, giving the opportunity to embed learning through practicing it in different contexts. The adults in Kindergarten engage in purposeful work, such as cooking, cleaning, mending, gardening, woodwork and seasonal tasks, and the child is able to work or play alongside them out of imitation. There is a healthy balance between child-led and adult-led activity.

The children's learning gains meaning and relevance by being embedded in a social context.

The vital role of social education

A key aim of our curriculum is to help the children gradually develop the awareness of others and empathy which underpin positive relationships and successful membership of society. We are aware that young children model their behaviour on what happens around them. Therefore, the adults in our kindergarten teach by example, supporting the development of positive habits and attitudes. We are conscious that it is not just what we do but how we do it that matters. The mixed age group in the Kindergarten also supports natural learning in a family-like context. The promotion of British Values and education for healthy relationships is woven into all aspects of the curriculum.

Aspects of our curriculum which promote social development include the priority given to child-led play, the support for communication and language skills, the way in which children are encouraged to help each other and to take on 'jobs' which help the whole group, and the modelling of strategies for dealing with confrontations and difficulties. Kindness and respect for others is practised by the teachers and encouraged in the children. Children are supported to have the confidence to express their own view, to listen to others views and work collaboratively. The consistent

routines and boundaries in the Kindergarten help children learn that rules matter and must be respected by all.

Protection of the senses

Our curriculum is based on an awareness that all the senses of the young child are very impressionable and easily over-stimulated. Every aspect of the Kindergarten environment is carefully considered to ensure that it is beautiful, gentle on the senses and as free from exterior distraction as possible. Furniture, equipment and playthings are of natural materials. Children are not rushed through their day but have plenty of time for sustained deep engagement with their play and learning in a relaxed and peaceful environment.

The importance of rhythm

The Kindergarten day follows a predictable pattern, alternating and balancing child-led time, such as free play, with teacher-led activities. Alongside the play are regular activities such as snack preparation and gardening, and an activity of the day. The snack is shared together around the table, where the mood is relaxed and social. Story-telling and puppetry are a key part of the morning too. Moments of quiet focus built into the rhythm of the day allow for awe and wonder. Once a week we welcome our Eurythmy teacher for group movement sessions.

Kindergarten children are also nurtured and supported by a weekly and yearly rhythm. The strong sense of routine enables the child to know what to expect and fosters a sense of security. Seasonal activities, songs and stories are repeated over several weeks; this supports the development of confidence and the consolidation of learning. Working with rhythm and repetition supports the children's understanding of past, present and future and promotes the healthy development of memory. Our festivals, often shared with families, provide rich cultural and spiritual experiences as highlights of the seasonal rhythm and do much to strengthen our sense of community.

Space and time for play

Children in Kindergarten have plenty of opportunity for child-initiated free play. Creative play supports physical, emotional and social development and allows children to learn through investigation, exploration and discovery. It also aids concentration and problem-solving, encourages mental creativity and the development of the imagination, and builds confidence and skills such as sharing, flexibility and co-operation.

The daily rhythm includes long periods of free play, both inside and outdoors in the garden; the children play outside every day, whatever the weather. Objects and materials provided for the children to play with are simple and open-ended, in order to support the widest possible range of play situations and to encourage the children's imaginative engagement.

Curriculum for the final year in Kindergarten (5-6 year olds)

The last year in Kindergarten is differentiated from the provision for the younger children. The curriculum for their last year in kindergarten prepares children for their next step in education. It takes account of the National Curriculum for this age group and the Independent School Standards.

The oldest Kindergarten children have special projects and activities giving opportunities for extended learning, as well as privileges, responsibilities and different expectations of behaviour, all of which prepare them for more formal schooling at age 6+. The teacher adopts a different approach with the 5 and 6-years-olds, which relies more on direct instruction and less on imitation and supports their developing reasoning skills.