

Class Four | Learning Journey & Curriculum Map

Class Four | Child Development

The successive school years in Waldorf Steiner education can be seen as a process of breathing: breathing in one year to breathe out the next year. One can see this when one surveys the classes across the school – some years have a definite introspective quality whilst others a more lively, outward-looking character. Growth and learning does not happen in a straight line. A new development in a child’s maturing soul is marked by a period of challenge or even turmoil followed by a steadier time in which the child enjoys and demonstrates newly acquired capacities or a new view of the world, before the next wave arrives and a new challenge presents itself. Children go through this individually and as a class. Whilst individual classes of course vary depending on the relative age of the children and their individual stories, as well as on the temperament of the Class Teacher, one can say that the odd years generally have a quieter, more unified quality compared with the even years, which can be more exuberant and sometimes more fractious. The harmony of class one usually breaks in class two. The children become cheekier and start to differentiate more between boys and girls, for example. In class three the children become quieter and more inward. They are beginning to wake up and become aware of their individuality, which can also lead to a feeling of separateness and doubt. The mood of class three is met by the reverence of the Old Testament stories with their austere and sure moral authority. Class four is exuberant, wild, funny, argumentative, clever, quick and hard-working. Of course there are still moments of individual doubt and uncertainty as well, because class four is a continuation of that process which began in class three. Some children go through the ‘Rubicon’ of the nine/ten year change well into class four. The overall impression when one stands before the class though is of confidence and enthusiasm. The children are now really here. You can see it in the way they greet and look at you. We can have a much stronger sense this year that we are standing in front of individual personalities. The children develop strong likes and dislikes and become more consciously interested in - and critical of - each other and their similarities and differences. They also become much more interested in the world. We hear many more pop songs being sung, or current events being discussed. The children are now really aware of everything going on around them. They take in the world at this age very intensely and are sensitive to the adult world surrounding them and project this back out without much of a filter. On a subtle level, one could say that they are very aware but not yet fully awake, and still experience life as a wakeful dream, which is why the curriculum must meet them with powerful stories, rich pictures and engaging activity.

Class Four | Humanities

| Active Learning Intention | Active Teaching Implementation | Active Environments Impact |
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| <p>Geography</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Knows about the geographical and spatial development of the immediate locality ● Can recognise the four compass directions by observing the sun ● Can identify some characteristic constellations round the North Star ● Can draw a bird's eye view (plan) of the school or their home, and immediate surroundings ● Describes and draws route to school, and simple maps ● Knows some local industries and professions ● Understands how their locality is linked to the wider world <p>History</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Knows some significant local historical events, and how these have affected the development of the locality ● Describes earlier peoples who populated their locality, and their effects on the local landscape and culture | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Draw child's knowledge to the local area and the importance of different aspects of trade, industry, geography. ● Teach the children to recognise a compass face, as well as how to use the sun and where it rises. ● Recall the use of shadow clocks as an intro to sun. ● Teach vocabulary about landscapes, and geographical landmarks. ● Show the children bird eye views of the buildings, plans, rooms etc. ● Teach history between place and people. <p>Teaching links about past and present, geography, people, industry,</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide opportunities to observe the local environment. ● Provide opportunities to meet important people in relation to the school's biography. ● Provide the opportunity to explore biography through genealogy. ● Provide lots of trips, visiting local areas of interest, both geographically and culturally. |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands the economic history of the local environment, either ancient or recent and industrial | | |
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Class Four | Humanities | Curriculum Narrative

As the children become more aware of their surroundings, a study of their local geography is undertaken. This can begin with an imaginative leap – to imagine the world looked at from above and make bird’s-eye-view drawings of their bedrooms, the classroom, the school and the local area. They are drawing maps. The children’s journeys to school can be collected to create a large map of the local area, placing their houses in relation to rivers, parks and main roads. This block should also involve walks around the local area. The children are also introduced to some of the local history of the area. It is an empowering lesson that gives the children a close relationship with their surroundings. Around this time, some of the children will start making their own way to school.

The Man and Animal main Lesson represents the beginning of a differentiated natural science curriculum. We begin with the part of the natural world that is closest to us, the animals, and move outwards from there. The children are developing a distance and therefore an objectivity towards the world, and so we approach animals in a new way – they no longer come walking and talking as they do in fairy tales and fables, but in a picture, accurately imagined and precisely described, of the animal in its environment. Still, we have to be careful to avoid dry facts and information taken in isolation, and rather give a truthful picture of each animal within a comparative framework. We see, through looking at each one’s way of life and habitat, that most animals specialise in something, and that as a result each has developed in a one-sided way. Birds for example, are so perfectly developed for flight, with their hollow bones and wonderful feathers, that they do not digest their food very thoroughly, certainly compared to the heavy cow, with its four stomachs! The human being, in contrast, does not have a body specialised for anything – we can’t leap like a squirrel from tree to tree or change colour like the cuttlefish. We have therefore retained a balance – one can see this in our teeth in the balance of molars, canines and incisors – and have the freedom as individuals to develop in many directions. What’s more, we differ from the animals because only we have fully freed our hands from the task of locomotion. Because we stand upright, our hands are free to shape and serve the world.