

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 | Sports & Movement

Active Learning Intention	Active Teaching Implementation	Active Environments Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Remembers and follows the rules of complex chasing games ● Is a respectful chaser ● Accepts being caught by a classmate ● Performs the Class 4 roundelay ● Engages with the small ball tricks programme 		

Class Four | Sports & Movement | Curriculum Narrative

Handcraft: With its symmetry and supported by colour and form, cross stitch helps children to gain confidence and inner firmness in this initial phase of their becoming independent. An understanding of a meaningful design to suit the purpose of the object begins to awaken. Aim of tasks is to train awareness and dexterity of both hands, awakening and promoting mental processes, and at the same time as producing final projects which have a practical use and function, as well as being aesthetically pleasing.

Eurythmy: Children work towards being able to work semi-independently with the basic Eurythmical elements in both speech and music Eurythmy. They contribute to a group form and work towards a short performance, with age appropriate geometrical transition forms as indicated by Rudolf Steiner being mastered and performed. Spatial and social awareness are raised.

Sports: At this time, the emphasis shifts from the group to the individual “I”. “You are there, I am here” is what the children are experiencing. The breathing element, the polarities between being awake and asleep, safety and danger, weak and strong are emphasised in games as a rhythm for contraction and expansion. At the same time, children at this age start to challenge adult authority or feel isolated from the group context and

the social and moral aspects of learning and respecting the rules become very important. Games are still introduced with a story to give an overall picture but the principle of separation becomes stronger and often involves one against the group. There is more tension and the children must wake up if they are not to get caught or tagged!