

Class Six | Learning Journey & Curriculum Map

Class Six | Child Development

The twelfth year of a child's life is a kind of limbo; he is no longer really a child, but he is not yet a teenager, and adulthood is still a long way off. After the challenge of the tenth year, comes the struggle to establish some balance and order, which is more or less achieved during Class 5. Then comes puberty, bringing another onslaught of emotions and physical changes that are difficult to deal with, both for the children themselves and the adults around them. What they have learned from their earlier experience is that the situation needs to be controlled, so, in Class 6, this is their response. But, as with everything at this age, it is somewhat heavy-handed and naïve. As always, this finds its reflection in the curriculum. Think of the Romans marching in uniform stride across the known world, everywhere encountering rebellious tribes with their varied and colourful histories, cultures and traditions, not engaging with them, but offering only two choices: surrender or be crushed. There you have a picture of the situation in the child's soul life at this time. Each one is a Roman emperor trying to maintain control of the realm of his own feelings by laying down the law. The world, other people, himself, everything is categorised and labeled: 'Things I like', 'Things I don't like', 'Things that are cool', 'Things that are rubbish', 'Things I will never do', 'Things I must do', 'Things I am good at', 'Things I am bad at', etc. In true Roman style, once the categories are fixed (and at this point he sees no reason why they would ever change) he compares his list with those of his peers, for reassurance, and adjusts it as necessary. Belonging to the group matters, and there is no room for variation in the group; its judgements are absolute. In this way, he finds a safe place for himself in the world. His question, for the moment, is 'Who are we?', not 'Who am I?' Although this is uncomfortable for us, (from our adult perspective, our children are submitting to peer pressure) it is just as it should be and we have to understand that they will come through it. Once the twelve-year-old has found where he fits, he believes that he has grown up - that he understands how the adult world works and that he will get older, but otherwise life will go on just as it is now. For some, and at times for all, this brings reassuring stability. Confidence comes from knowing what the rules are and abiding by them. But for everyone there is an underlying feeling of disappointment - a feeling of 'Is this really all there is?' At this moment, we take a file of something boring and familiar off the shelf (of course they groan as we do it), blow off the dust and open it up. They get ready to add some dull facts to their collection, resigned to the prospect of spending their remaining school days in this way. But instead we take them into a completely dark room, turn on a torch and they can't see it; how is that possible? They find that they can hear the difference between cold water and hot water; but temperature is something you feel, not hear! That a small piece of wire can ring like a church bell, as long as the sound doesn't have to travel through the air; so everything we hear is muffled?? We show them that everything they thought they knew is just a signpost to something greater and more fascinating than they could

ever have imagined. We start to open up the familiar world so that it fills again with the wonder it held for them when they were very small and everything was new; to plant the seed of a thought in their minds: 'There is no end to what I can discover. I could go on being surprised and delighted by the world for the rest of my life!' All of this is a background to the curriculum in the Middle School - Classes 6, 7 and 8 - but it is this bringing, at every stage, of things to which the children can relate directly out of the experience of their own inner lives that makes Steiner Waldorf education unique and powerful. After the twelfth year, the faculties of judgement and objectivity develop as a counterbalance to the emotional turmoil of adolescence, and we can look with clarity at the physical world. In Class 6, we do this through Physics, Geometry and drawing from observation. We also consider the different ways in which people have dealt with the world, worked with it, changed it and thought about it through History, Geography, Art, Literature, Maths. These examples and experiences model for the children how the world can be interpreted and the many ways in which it is possible to enter into life.

Class Six | Science

Active Learning Intention	Active Teaching Implementation	Active Environments Impact
------------------------------------	---	-------------------------------------

<p>Plants and Animals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Understands and can describe the differing needs of plants for survival and growth ● Understands plant cultivation—crop rotation, composting, pest control ● Understands the relationships between plant structure, environment and seasonal life-cycles ● <i>Can describe in detail a range of animals from around the world, and discuss their adaptations, e.g. elephants, dolphins and whales, kangaroo, snakes, tortoise, salmon and eel, mussels,? Class 4?</i> ● <i>In connection with gardening? snails, earthworms, butterfly, beetles, bees and ants.</i> <p>Geology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Knows the three types of rock and common examples</i> ● <i>Understands how these are formed and the rock cycle</i> ● <i>Understands the physical composition of the earth (core, mantle, crust)</i> ● <i>Understands the movement of tectonic plates</i> ● <i>Understands the different ways in which mountains are formed</i> ● <i>Understands external landscape forming</i> 	<p>Gardening lessons - can Sophie help with this?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gardening lessons
--	---	---

<p><i>processes</i></p> <p>Physics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Re-write these using Trostl concepts?</i> ● Understands sound as vibration, and the relationships between vibration, sound, tone, pitch and volume ● Experiences colour, understanding illumination and shadow, complementary colours, and contrast ● Understands and can discuss magnetism, including the concept of north and south poles, how a material is magnetised, the magnetic field of the earth, the concept of magnetic attraction and repulsion ● Observes and can describe the phenomena of electro-static attraction and repulsion ● Understands some different sources of heat and cooling, including combustion and friction 		
---	--	--

Class Six | Science | Curriculum Narrative

After Zoology and Botany, Physics is the next part of the science curriculum to be brought as a separate subject. We move from the study of living things, to which the children can relate through their feeling life, to that of natural phenomena, which they come to understand more through direct experience and thinking. We look at the nature of Sound, Light and Heat, considering also their counterparts, Silence, Darkness and Cold. We also experiment with Magnetism and Electricity. Phenomena are experienced and characterised through language and art as well as through experiments to discover their nature and how they behave. This is not about proving known theories, as so much science education is, but about

getting them to use and trust their own senses to learn about the world; we do not tell them what they ought to see or hear, but ask them and help them to be aware of what they actually experience. A lack of trust in our own ability to learn from direct experience leads to a dependence on authority in all its forms, and thereby to a lack of freedom to think, judge and decide things for ourselves, so the way in which these lessons are conducted has a value and importance beyond the bounds of scientific investigation.