

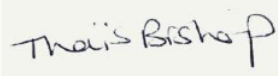
Curriculum Policy

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Endorsement: Full endorsement to this policy is given by:

Name: Thais Bishop
Position: Brighton Waldorf School Trustee

Signed:



Date: 29th November 2022

Policy statement

Brighton Waldorf School works out of the pedagogical indications of Rudolf Steiner and with the internationally recognised Waldorf Steiner curriculum, which is a broad canvas of general principles and specific examples. Brighton Waldorf School uses [‘The Educational Tasks and Content of the Waldorf Steiner Curriculum’ edited by Martyn Rawson & Tobias Richter](#) as its curriculum guide.

Introduction

This Waldorf curriculum is intended to:

- foster the healthy development of each child
- enable children to reach their potential
- help children to develop the skills they need to contribute to society

The achievement of these outcomes relies on the curriculum not only meeting the needs of the developing child at the key developmental stages of childhood and adolescence, but also on teaching in ways which stimulate important developmental experiences. The Waldorf curriculum has the fundamentally therapeutic task of supporting the healthy development of the whole person.

There are three stages in the curriculum at Brighton Waldorf School: The Early Years, Lower School & Upper School, and each requires a different style of presentation as well as a difference in content so as to be most relevant for that age-group.

Early Years

In the early Years, children learn through practical experience, by doing and through imitation of the teachers. An important aspect here is ‘creative play’ where the pupils make up their own games with non-specific equipment which enables them to create a huge variety of settings within which to act out their own social dramas. This activity allows for the development of healthy social skills with the teacher

only intervening to guide the play when the pupils are not able to resolve the difficulties themselves. This activity also strengthens and develops the child's own creativity since they are working from their own imagination rather than relying on concepts and characters designed by adults.

The importance of healthy rhythm is recognised in the daily and weekly timetable as well as in the particular rhythmical work undertaken during ring-time (a teacher-led period of movement , songs and poems with a seasonal narrative), and also in the seasonal round of practical activities.

Practical activities include a range of domestic (cooking, tidying) and artistic (painting, drawing, craftwork) tasks which the pupils learn through imitation. There is an emphasis on using natural materials to develop awareness of and relationship to the natural world. This is also developed through outside play in the Early Years garden where there is an opportunity for gardening activities as well as scope for more imaginative play. The Early Years Groups make a number of excursions throughout the year including a daily walk to the local park, which again offers the chance to develop a relationship with the natural world. Finally, the Festivals underpin this rhythmical relationship to the world around us combining the fruits and flowers of the seasons with the deeper underlying experience of the major multicultural religious festivals. Parents are encouraged to participate in these festivals and share these enriching experiences with their children.

Lower School

The seventh year generally sees the start of formal learning with the curriculum moving away from the more generalised experiential world of the Early Years to the more formal introduction of literacy, numeracy and other disciplines. There are broad guidelines for both a horizontal curriculum for each year and a vertical curriculum for each subject area across the years, although every teacher is encouraged to deliver the curriculum in their own way.

The main themes for each year are introduced through the Main Lessons which take up the first 2 hours of each day and run for approximately 3 weeks in a block. It is generally the Class Teacher who delivers Main Lessons to their class but occasionally, around Class 7 or 8, other specialist teachers might deliver a specific Main Lesson subject.

These themes are described in detail in Rawson & Richter and are taught through the medium of storytelling and illustrations, strengthened by use of rhythmical and repetitive activities, e.g. bean bag throwing & skipping to accompany times tables, recitation of poems of increasing complexity and the singing of seasonal and other appropriate songs. These activities form an essential part of the Main Lesson in the Lower School and help the pupils to develop memory as well as fine and gross motor skills.

As the pupils progress up the school the content of the Main Lesson changes to meet their developmental needs and broadens out to include a wider variety and increasing complexity of material. There is also increasing involvement from the pupils with individual projects in the main lesson topics, with a strong emphasis on learning to present these orally to an audience.

The written aspects of the work are recorded in Main Lesson books which are a compilation of dictated and original material and extensive illustrations. In Waldorf Education art is considered not a subject but a

medium and in the early Lower School years the children work with illustration and colour. High quality drawing materials are used and ink pen writing is not introduced until Class 4, arriving there through a main lesson on writing techniques through the ages. Once ink has been introduced, colour and illustration remain an important complement to the written work and the task is for each child to produce a book that is both informative and aesthetically pleasing.

Outside the Main Lesson, pupils are introduced to other subject lessons, mainly by specialist teachers starting with Painting, Handwork, Eurythmy, Religion, French & German, and extending to include English, Maths, Cooking, Gardening, Pottery, Science, Drama, Life Skills and Music, although this last is organically woven into each Class Teacher's Main Lessons, rather than being taught by a specialist teacher. The subject lessons have their own vertical curriculum and generally mirror aspects of the main lesson themes for each year.

Upper School

The Waldorf Curriculum recognises that the capacity for intellectual thought takes a leap around the age of 14 and so the style of teaching and the content changes somewhat at this point. The Main Lesson Curriculum is now presented by a series of specialist teachers and the content becomes increasingly complex: it has in some instances been likened more to AS level delivery than GCSE. There is still the link between the inner developmental life of the pupil and the Main Lesson topics presented.

The school offers a broad selection of Main Lesson topics to Classes 9 & 10, and accompanies these with the delivery of essential GCSE subjects in: Maths, English Language, English Literature, French, German, Drama, Sciences and Art. Students also continue with other practical and artistic lessons: Pottery, Eurythmy, Music and Sport, to maintain a balanced curriculum. Life Skills are taught in Classes 8-10 to inform students of issues facing them both as citizens and as individuals in society, and to support their applications to VI form colleges.

Other relevant policies:

Assessment Policy