

Curriculum Policy

Prepared using:

- Avison K. 2004 “A Handbook for Waldorf Class Teachers” Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship.
- Rawson M. & Avison K (2014 edition) “The Tasks and Content of the Steiner-Waldorf Curriculum” Steiner Waldorf Education/Floris Books.
- Waldorf publication “Guide to the Early Years Foundation Stage in Steiner Waldorf Settings”
- DfE Publication EYFS Statutory Framework, February 2018
- Waldorf APP Artofteaching.org curriculum frameworks

General Principles

The Iona School follows the educational and curriculum indications given by Rudolf Steiner. Steiner’s philosophy, which he called ‘Anthroposophy’ (‘awareness of the essential nature of human beings’) provides a stimulus for those working in our school to wrestle with questions about the origin and destiny of humanity. Living with these questions and recognising that every human being is a unique spiritual individual, strengthens the teachers’ respect for their pupils who in turn feel that they are understood. Within this process the children are inspired to love learning.

“The Tasks and Content of the Steiner Waldorf Curriculum” edited by Avison and Rawson (published by Floris Books) is the original reference text for lesson planning within The Iona School. This is used alongside the Fellowship art of teaching app, which includes much of the same content.

The way in which the curriculum is implemented plays a vital role in promoting the health and wellbeing of our pupils as they develop physically, emotionally, and intellectually. Every aspect of teaching, whatever the subject, aims to balance these needs at each stage of the child’s development. This marrying of content and method lays the foundation for an educational experience which contributes significantly to establishing resilience in childhood as a foundation for adult life. This develops lifelong learning habits, enabling children to become enthusiastic, imaginative, resilient, and creative students, who are eager to learn.

Aims of the School

We aim to provide a safe and secure environment in which our pupils:

- Can enjoy a broad and balanced education.
- Have the opportunity to acquire and develop the knowledge, understanding and skills necessary to make a confident transition to the next stage of their educational life and to serve as a basis for engagement in lifelong learning.
- Are encouraged to fulfil their potential in relation to their abilities, skills and interests in accordance with their spiritual, moral, social, cultural, intellectual, emotional and physical development.
- Are given the foundations for future participation as effective citizens in a multicultural society, having respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs, actively promoting British Values.
- Are encouraged to develop and sustain an active and healthy lifestyle
- Are safe in the online, digital world.
- Have awareness of appropriate boundaries in relationships and have the confidence to assert these if necessary.
- Know more and are able to do more by the time they leave the school.
- Are prepared for secondary school

The Curriculum

The curriculum takes account of the fact that children experience the world in different ways according to their age. It reflects and supports the developing consciousness of the pupils at each stage of their life in school. It is concerned with the emergence of the unique individuality of each child and his/her connection with the world.

The Waldorf curriculum is an invaluable resource for teachers who are working to support children in the process of awakening to knowledge of themselves, of feeling a connection to the world and to finding their bearings within it.

Kindergarten Curriculum - Implementation

The 'kindergarten phase' can last until pupils are rising 7.

Adults carefully monitor the all-round development of all children. The curriculum for their last year in the kindergarten is differentiated, and there are different expectations of the older children. Activities set across all areas develop, strengthen or enhance skills and abilities such as:

Physical coordination and integration, social and emotional relationships, imagination and fantasy (scientific enquiry), aesthetic appreciation, ability to stick at a task/maintain focus, independence, confidence, resilience and love of learning.

Each day is complete in itself; no conscious demands are made on the memory of the child from one day to the next.

The times between the structured, adult-led activities (ring time, snack time, the day's activity and story) are where the children can engage in undirected, self-initiated and imaginative play.

The rhythm of the week is established because each day has a particular activity (painting, baking, eurythmy, nature walks etc). The rhythm of the year is experienced by following the seasons and celebrating the festivals with songs, poems, games and specific craft activities.

Our curriculum framework is how we teach children aged 5+ whilst in the Kindergarten setting. Whilst we do have exemptions to parts of the EYFS (please see Appendix 1) we use the rest of the EYFS statutory framework when considering our teaching.

Up to the age of seven, teaching works with the children's will, through activity and through imitation.

Kindergarten Curriculum - Intent

At The Iona School's Kindergarten, children benefit from an extended childhood. They have the opportunity to embed basic skills (physical, emotional, social and cognitive), and develop lifelong learning habits that enable them to become students who are enthusiastic, imaginative, resilient, creative and eager to learn. Children join kindergarten from three years of age until they are six.

How children learn in kindergarten

In the first seven years, the young child learns to be at home in the physical body, developing an orientation in space and acquiring the developmental capacities of uprightiness, speech and thought. The content of the child's whole environment is the learning context; the child imitates the people and agencies that are in their environment. In the kindergarten, experiential learning, discovery through creative play and social interaction with peers and teachers constitute the main education themes. Awareness of the complexities of language and number is acquired through play, daily activities, and social interaction. In the seventh year, the child begins to develop the facility for independent, representational, pictorial thinking. The formal schooling process begins in Class 1 at age 6 rising 7, when reading and writing are introduced.

5-6 year old Curriculum

From the summer after a child turns 5, they take part in a language ring time once or twice a week. Where possible a Eurythmy session is also participated in once a week.

During the last two terms of kindergarten, the transition group (the 5 and 6 year olds) begin to take on a more challenging role. The transition children have one or two sessions a week where they work directly with their teacher as a separate group from the younger children. Activities will include listening to "chapter" stories and drawing pictures from those stories, beeswax modelling, playing cooperative board games, more challenging ring time activities and craft projects. This may include sewing and weaving and simple woodwork. Such projects incorporate a wide variety of skills and equipment: finger knitting and plaiting, washing and carding sheep fleece, making felt, cutting, sewing, sawing, whittling, sanding and drilling. Using the appropriate tools and equipment needed. Children work at their own pace and often offer to help each other. These transition-specific activities are more formalised and intended to extend the learning in an effort to strengthen the stamina and resilience for completing a task, widening and deepening children's experiences in a planned manner which is related both to the individual children's needs and interests, and the needs and interests of the whole group.

During the last term of kindergarten, the transition children are brought together at story time to be told longer, more complex fairy tales which meet the inner mood and development of the older children and which require increased attention and listening skills. Therapeutic stories to prepare the children for their journey to Class 1 are introduced towards the end of term.

An experiential and active learning environment – Impact

All learning in a Waldorf kindergarten, including pre-literacy and numeracy, is experiential and connected to meaningful activities that are available every day. The mixed age group of three to six-year-olds provides a unique space where older children can 'step up' in all areas of kindergarten life. They can use their initiative, extend and individualise activities, take responsibility, lead and develop independence. Older children may be asked to prepare the table for snack, count the number of chairs, and match bowls and cups, including adding or taking away numbers. Children measure and weigh ingredients for baking, develop and use mathematical language such as heavy and light, more or less. Children experience weight, height and gravity especially when engaging in large construction play, both indoors and outside. Older children are asked to help younger children and serve food at snack-times. Conversation around the meal table often leads to how many children are present, the ages of those present (and siblings), and ages of past / future times. Children acquire a rich vocabulary through learning stories, songs, and verses by heart. Older children may be asked to help the teacher with the puppet shows and are given space and time to make up their own stories and puppet shows. Children learn to recognise their name and those of others by observing name labels and often want to practise writing for birthday and other cards, menus for a play restaurant, and signs for games.

Children are supported to build up stamina: the ability to pay attention for longer periods of time, persistence, and the ability to complete a task they have begun. All these are skills which facilitate a gentle transition to the formal learning stage which then takes place in the child's seventh year.

Assessment and transition to Class 1

Waldorf / EYFS Assessment forms are used to assess the progress of the children throughout all three years of Kindergarten, including the child's transition year. There are additional aspects of development and curriculum on these forms for the 5-6 year olds, reflecting their stage of development and the differentiated curriculum provided for this age group. Reports are written at the end of the Kindergarten year, for 5 and 6 year olds. All observations and reports are passed onto the new Class 1 teacher. During the summer term, all rising Class 1 children are observed and discussed weekly by the Class 1 teacher and the Kindergarten teachers. Wherever possible the class teacher will meet with parents and children in an informal setting before school starts formally in September. On the first day of the first term, the Class 1 ceremony includes the children being greeted by their Kindergarten teacher then meeting their Class 1 teacher who leading them to their new class. Class 1 children will continue to have periods of free play outside with the Kindergarten children during their first term as Class 1.

Main School Curriculum - Implementation

Once in the main school, children have a Class Teacher who stays with them throughout school. This continuity means the Class Teacher knows each pupil and the social dynamics of the class extremely well and so can facilitate the successful management of the social and interpersonal issues that relate to the increasing maturity of the pupils.

The Main Lesson

The school day starts with a two-hour Main Lesson, taught to the whole class by the Class Teacher. The Main Lesson is organised into subject blocks which are taught in depth for about 3 - 4 weeks each. Each class follows a Main Lesson programme set out in the curriculum for each year group, this runs from January to December each year.

The Main Lesson embraces and addresses a varied and progressive range of skills, competencies and faculties in mathematics, literacy, science and humanities. It is an integrated and artistically presented whole in which the specific curriculum content for a particular age group is brought to the children. Each Main Lesson should contain a balance between the engagement of the child's thinking, feeling and willing. Each Main Lesson has several components and may include practical elements, artistic activities, music, speech, singing and movement, as well as oral and written work and mathematics.

The Main Lesson begins with a morning verse, singing, recitation of poetry, rhythmic movement, times tables, social games, and concentration exercises. This is often called "circle time". Items which are relevant to the Main Lesson theme are woven into the active nature of this first part of the lesson. The benefits of this rhythmical beginning to the school day include the strengthening of the social cohesion of the class, improvement to physical coordination and spatial awareness and strengthening concentration. Learning rhythmically does not tire the children and enables repetition to occur with renewed interest and a better quality of attention.

The Three Day Rhythm

Another important aspect of the Main Lesson is the "three day rhythm". On the first day, the teacher presents new material or guides the children to specific learning experiences, pupils hear this new content but are not expected to do anything with it. The content of this first day is presented in an imaginative way, usually in the form of a story or activity. On the following day, after 'sleeping on' the previous day's content, the pupils are asked to recall whatever they can remember from the previous day's content, this may be expressed through discussion, drama, or other artistic avenues. On the third day, following the recall, the children complete work with the knowledge or experience they have gained. Writing, exploring mathematical processes, drawing pictures, craftwork, are the most frequent ways of bringing material to expression but this work could also include painting, modelling, or drama.

Combined Classes

Each class comprises two academic year groups. In order to fully integrate our combined classes for the main lesson work, the younger group leave the kindergarten sooner than is usual in Waldorf settings. Class 1 children go to their Class Teacher in the September after their sixth birthday, the beginning of the academic year. The younger group are assessed and those that are ready join Class 1 during the course of the Autumn Term, instead of completing the whole year in the Kindergarten. The children are altogether as a Transition/Class 1 by the first school day in the Spring Term.

The Class One curriculum then fully begins in the Spring Term (January). The curriculum year coincides with the calendar year, not the academic year. This ensures that all children experience some aspects of the curriculum specifically aimed at meeting particular developmental thresholds at the appropriate time.

The Main Lessons which include - Literacy, Mathematics, Humanities, Science, Music/Singing, Drama (Class Plays) and Form Drawing are taught by the Class Teacher. Subject Teachers, with expertise in their subject area, deliver the subject lessons in Art, Eurythmy, PSHE, Languages (MFL), Games (from Class 3), Handwork and Woodwork (Class 5).

Why we teach what we do – Intent

Class1 (Year 2 - Age 6-7) - Laying the Foundations

Around the seventh year the child completes the process of forming the second dentition sufficiently for the forces that have been concentrated on growth and physical upbuilding, to become active in developing the facility for independent, representational, pictorial thinking. With the Class 1 curriculum we see the beginning of “formal” education in the Waldorf method. ‘Formal’ methods of teaching - in literacy, numeracy and other subject disciplines are now introduced.

The curriculum at this stage honours the fact that the children are still in a pictorial consciousness, limited in their ability to bring focused concentration to the learning setting. Much learning is achieved through activity and imitation. Subject material is introduced through traditional fairy tales and stories which portray the cycles of the natural world and seasonal changes, which engage the children’s feelings.

The curriculum begins with a Main Lesson block in Form Drawing. A series of basic straight and curved lines are drawn by the children, making the shapes with the movement of their whole bodies before drawing them on paper. Form Drawing is an excellent preliminary exercise to writing.

In literacy Main Lessons the children are introduced to the letters of the alphabet. The consonants emerge out of pictograms from fairy tales and the vowels out of interjections and expressions of feeling. By allowing the shape of a letter to emerge from a picture, the children can develop their own relationship to the individual letters and later to the whole activity of writing and reading. Through the use of pictures, rhymes and stories children are introduced to the forms, sounds and sequencing of letters.

The content of written work in Class 1 is related to main lesson stories and the child’s own experiences. Much of the writing is composed by the teacher and is copied from the board or in the form of dictation; children begin to compose their own text during the following Autumn Term.

Reading proceeds from writing, and in Class 1 the children read familiar texts which the teacher has written on the board and which they themselves have written in their Main Lesson books. An integrated combination of phonics, whole word and contextual methods are used to develop reading.

Oral work plays an important role throughout the classes with equal emphasis on both speaking and listening. Good skills in both are seen as the prerequisites for the development of all literacy skills.

Mathematics is initially brought to the children through movement, games, and lots of counting activities which allow the children to develop an inner relationship with number. The number qualities are first brought through stories and pictures to the children in Class 1. Motivation, coordination, and curiosity are then woken through lots of rhythmical and practical activities. In these early stages, number patterns, tallying and Roman Numerals are explored and then the more abstract symbols of Arabic Numbers are brought. The four basic arithmetic functions are then brought to the children through story content and drawings.

The aim is to approach actual calculation as concretely and visually as possible and to keep in mind the principle of working from the 'Whole to the Parts'. A range of counting aids are used to build solid 1:1 relationship when counting and working out calculations.

Children are also introduced to number riddles which form the first exercises in mental arithmetic. They also begin to learn times-tables by heart through rhythmic activities and drawing sequences.

Main Lesson themes alternate between literacy and numeracy. Therefore, during a literacy Main Lesson, number work is consciously set completely aside, allowing it to be "forgotten". The same applies for literacy during a number Main Lesson. When the subject returns it is found that it has taken hold in a new way during the "fallow period".

Class 2 (Year 3 - Age 7-8)

In Class 2 the children continue to thrive in a learning context where pictorial thought content is to the fore. The intellect is allowed to awaken through an artistic approach. The children now develop a greater awareness of what is happening in the world around them and are moving away from the experience of wholeness. They become aware of differences and this affects the way they relate to one another.

Legends and fables provide the main story content for the year. The children are supported in their development by hearing about human qualities and characteristics as portrayed by saints and holy people in the legends, and by animals in the fables.

In Mathematics the children continue to practise the four processes which they were taught in Class 1. Now they are able to work with more difficult examples, moving away from manual operation to mental calculation. They begin to expand on calculations using the four processes as well as further practice of times-tables.

Class 3 (Year 4 - Age 8-9)

In Class 3 the children become more self-conscious and so begin to experience a feeling of greater separation from the world and people around them. They begin to experience, with increasing intensity, a sense of objectivity alongside a growing subjectivity.

Being separate from the world enables the children to learn about it in a practical way. In Class 3 Main Lessons in Measuring (Time, Money, Weight, Linear Measurement and Volume), Farming and House Building give strength and confidence at a time when children can feel vulnerable and uncertain. They hear stories which recount a pioneering family's journey to build their own home. The children begin to go out on lots of trips to local farms, sites of interest in the local catchment and also visit the Avoncroft Building Museum, where they get some first-hand experience of early house building techniques.

During this year, the Old Testament Stories are another basis for the development of literacy and the formal introduction of grammar. As they are learning more consciously about the world the children also learn about the human being's responsibility, as it is shown in the stories of creation in Genesis.

In mathematics they begin to work with Place Value (Th,H,T,Ones) and continue to expand on sums using higher numbers, alongside further practice of times-tables. The calculating of all forms of measurements are also practised as a result of Measuring Main Lesson blocks.

Class 4 (Year 5 - Age 9 - 10)

Now the children have taken a further step in the development of their individualities and the curriculum broadens further. They learn about their locality in Home Surroundings (local Geography and History) and a Main Lesson based on the relationship between the Human Being and the Animal Kingdom marks the beginning of natural science. These subjects along with the stories of Norse Mythology provide the basis for further developing literacy. The children's need to find a new relationship to their work, to peers and to teachers is supported by stories in which a variety of personalities contribute to a social whole in which darkness and evil become more concrete.

The earlier harmony between outer and inner worlds is transformed for the children in their 9th year, and so this is reflected within mathematics as the children are introduced to Fractions. They hereby experience something in the teaching content which they are experiencing for themselves. All previously taught work with the four processes, measurement, number riddles, mental arithmetic and times-tables are also practised, strengthened and expanded upon during this year.

Class 5 (Year 6 - Age 10 - 11)

In Class 5 the awareness of self has strengthened and out of the growing memory the sense for time has developed. During this year, further study of mythology - Ancient Indian, Persian, Babylonian, Egyptian and Greek – continues to foster literacy skills and also supports the pupils' developing consciousness of the sequence of time.

The Study of the Plant Kingdom with its yearly cycle further enhances this process as well as enriching their literacy skills. The Geography curriculum broadens during this year as the children are introduced to the countries of the British Isles.

The class are taken on a residential trip in connection with aspects of their studies this year. They may be away for up to a week and are expected to help with fundraising for the trip throughout the year.

In mathematics, decimal fractions are taught and now the children are able to calculate freely with whole numbers and fractions. Another key element within mathematics is the introduction of compasses, set squares and protractors, in order to accurately construct geometrical forms.

In connection with their study of the Greeks, Class 5 pupils go to the Waldorf Olympics which are held at the Waldorf school, Michael Hall, in Sussex. Parents are invited to attend the Games which take place on a Saturday morning after the children's two days of training.

The pupils' concept of 'Time' at this age is becoming established and now the History of the Ancient Greeks and Romans is taught. The Roman mastery of the earth and establishment of Law and Order meets the children in a positive way. Stories shared, give a moral counterbalance of inner idealism and justice.

The geometry of the Hexagon is introduced at this period when the skeletal system of the human being is becoming harder, which is linked to the cells of the skeleton being hexagonal. A study is made of geology, of the formation of the earth's rocks and of the processes of erosion, deposition etc.

Percentages, Simple Interest, and Profit and Loss are taught at this stage, whilst geography expands to cover the Continent of Europe.

Subject Lessons –

The Main Lesson can include elements from all subjects, but these mainly feature Mathematics, Literacy including drama, Humanities, Science, Form drawing and Music including singing.

Subject lessons taught by subject teachers as stand alone lessons are Art, Modern Foreign Language (MFL), Games/Gym, Design technology including I.C.T., handwork and woodwork, PSHE and Religious studies.

Mathematics

Developed by early cultures, mathematics is one of the oldest forms of human knowledge. It is a cultural tool that can be used to measure, quantify, calculate, compute and express complex relationships and it is the basis of many sciences and most technology. Though terminology and some procedures vary culturally, the underlying principles in mathematics are universal. It is a way of thinking about the world that is innate in its elemental forms (e.g. unity, duality, parts of wholes and simple numbers) but as a cultural technique is only learned by most people through instruction. The link between the abstract symbols that are learned and the processes they represent require focused mental activity and reasoning, and because of its abstract nature, maths has to be carefully taught so that all children can grasp mathematical concepts and master mathematical processes.

Waldorf education always proceeds carefully, from the whole to the parts and from the tangible to the abstract so that all learners can follow the transitions. Mathematics is first experienced in concrete, practical ways through real-world activities. Then the relationships between quantities and their abstract numerical values and relationships (e.g. number bonds, time tables) are explored. Though maths is a way of thinking in itself, in the Waldorf curriculum it is always applied and practiced in relation to real questions of calculation in a wide range of fields from technology and crafts, dealing with money and economics as well as engineering and architecture. Maths is also a process that schools the imagination and flexibility of thinking through creative problem solving, but simultaneously exercises the will in seeing processes through their logical and necessary sequences.

Literacy

Literacy in the narrow sense of reading and writing is also the basis for other vital literacies, media literacy, science literacy, emotional literacy, which all share the basic aspects of articulating and understanding complexity.

Literacy always accompanies or perhaps serves orality. In Waldorf education great emphasis is placed on good, clear, expressive, sensitive and powerful speaking from kindergarten to the upper school. Poetry, drama, storytelling, rhetoric and conversation are cultivated hand in hand with literacy. For young children, making the transition from living in a world of living oral language to adding the dimension of literacy, where abstract symbols represent reality, is a hugely complex process requiring powerful energy and focus, and the coordination of our hands and eyes and thinking. Waldorf education therefore, similarly to most countries around the world, introduces explicit literacy instruction at the age of 6 when the children enter Class 1. This

enables children to develop high levels of orality, language familiarity, phonological awareness and fine motor coordination as a foundation on which to begin more formal learning. In order to make the transition to using abstract symbols easier for many children, the introduction of writing and reading is facilitated by artistic methods and movement using the whole body.

As Michael Rose (2007) points out, literacy is neither innate nor simply acquired; it is a highly complex cultural technology. Teaching writing and reading is therefore also a complex process that benefits from clarity, consistency, thoroughness and time. Equally important is the way that children feel about the process of learning to read and write. Research shows that reading enjoyment and positive emotions linked to learning are crucial indicators of long term success. Waldorf education wants children to enjoy writing and reading and be motivated to do it, so they can express themselves, develop literacy skills and access the imaginative worlds and information this makes possible. Right from the start children are encouraged to use the literacy skills they are acquiring in simple reading and writing tasks so that proficiency can develop. Waldorf children become avid readers with extensive interests and enthusiastic writers, capable of a wide range of writing styles, from narrative, poetry, formal and informal writing, scientific writing and ultimately, critical and academic writing.

Humanities

The world around us and the world as it was throughout history has an incredibly important part to play in the Waldorf curriculum. History and Geography are therefore strongly embedded within Main Lesson content.

History

The Waldorf history curriculum shows how human societies relate to the world and to each in the past and present, not by compiling a compendium of facts, dates, battles and kings but by developing a chronological sense of global cultural change and how people experienced their lives at different times and in places. Starting from archetypal images of human beings and their relationships through folktales, legends and myths from a wide range of cultural settings, the children get to know the nature of human social life in its most basic forms, the family, social roles, peoples and tribes, how societies are organised by rules, social hierarchies and responsibilities. The journey is made from myth to recorded history and how history is shaped by the various forms of cultural memory and the wish of powerful people to record their real and imagined deeds for posterity.

The pupils experience the historical period through historical narrative, myths, images and artefacts which show the relationship of a given people to their natural environment (i.e. their economy and lifestyle), how cultures interacted with other cultures, how they traded and learned from each other and also the conflicts they had. This symptomatic approach means choosing significant moments in history that reveal the consciousness of the people at the time and perhaps when new forms arose. Through the skilled facilitation of the class teacher, the pupils learn to recognise and understand the historical processes involved.

In Class 3 the traditional forms of economic relationships are introduced when learning about farming, house-building and traditional trades. In the legends of The Old Testament they learn about people's struggles for national identity in an archaic society and encounter the political structures of ancient civilisations.

In Class 4 and 5 the historical pictures of local and national environments give children a first sense of historical time. They hear tales and legends about earlier people who lived and worked here. The mythology stories during these classes also give children a context for cultural beliefs and highlight the history content of these times. Festivals are also a vehicle to both study and experience historical events which are celebrated throughout the year.

Geography

As the child's world expands, so should the curriculum (David Sobel, Mapmaking with Children)

Geography is an understanding of the earth as a physical space. Long before we learned to map it, humanity dwelled on the land, found its sustenance there and explored the places, moods, climate and weather of the land of which they were a part. Human cultures have been shaped by the places people lived, and whole landscapes have been shaped by human actions. In the modern world, human behaviour is impacting the earth in ways that are having catastrophic effects on the climate and by polluting or destroying whole regions. Waldorf education believes that if this is to change, children and young people need to form a relationship to the earth, its oceans and atmosphere, climate and the space we are all part of through experience, empathy, knowledge and understanding.

From an early age, geography comes about through the experience and observations of the cycle of the seasons; most importantly, the major cycles of life and death in nature. During times of outdoor explorative-play and lessons in nature, children's attention is drawn to the world around them and every element is the starting point for discussion and discovery. In the early classes the kingdoms of nature, the elements and the seasons are brought to the children through the form of parables, nature legends, fables, such as those of Aesop and through stories of the Saints. In these early classes, environmental studies belong as an integral part of every lesson.

This relationship begins by exploring the world before our doors, beneath our feet and that rains on our heads. Children, both urban and rural, need to discover the land around them, how it has shaped our culture (housing, clothing, food) and how we are connected to other places (rivers, pathways and transport routes).

Geography is also the foundation for economics which, at heart, is the process of creating value through the transformation of raw materials to meet human needs and trading them. Where these resources come from, how we get them and what impact that has, who profits and who loses are important lessons to be learned. This begins in Class 3 Main Lessons of Farming and Money.

The geography curriculum has the logic of space: from Class 4, it expands radially outwards from where we are to places near and then far, describing as we go the landscapes we pass through, the agriculture and industries that grew there and have often now gone silent. We learn to orientate ourselves in space and how to represent it in abstract but useful maps.

In later classes, the study of local and national surroundings through visits, map/atlas work, plant study, farming and gardening are primary components of the rich geography curriculum.

Science

Science is a way of understanding the richness and complexity of the world. Waldorf education recognises that there are different ways of understanding how we arrive at reliable knowledge, and that science, although it is not the only valid way, is one important aspect of this.

With our school, due to the stage of development of the children, science focuses on experiencing and describing phenomena. This means encountering the world, observing it, observing ourselves and what the world does to us, describing our experiences and then forming judgements about them. The Waldorf science curriculum starts holistically by being and working in the world alongside rich imaginative experiences through storytelling, so that children build their knowledge of the local natural environment and the vocabulary with which to discuss and describe it.

Science is then more formally introduced through a series of Main Lessons, starting with the Creation Stories in Class 3, which give a spiritual image of the origins of the earth, plants, animals and human beings. Then in Class 4 when the Human Being and the Animal Kingdom is explored and then through the study of The Plant Kingdom which comes in Class 5.

At each step we look at the particular, zoom out to set it in its context and then formulate what characterises the phenomena. As children's ability to work scientifically is developed, observations become more systematic and analytical and investigations include fair testing, they can form and justify conclusions.

The Waldorf science approach is a process of meaning-making from experiences which develops conceptual understanding. It appreciates that we cannot always grasp the whole because of its complexity, so we take manageable parts, respectfully get to know them, then relate the part back into the wider context and its implications. Thus knowledge of the wider, greater whole grows step by step.

Form Drawing

A key feature within Waldorf education and is introduced at the beginning of formal learning in Class 1 with the introduction of the straight and curved lines. Throughout the class years the children have 1 lesson per week of Form Drawing. Flowing linear patterns are formed to strengthen the children's relationship to both inner and outer space. These progress throughout the years to include simple hand drawn geometric forms, mirrored forms on various axes as well as the introduction of cursive script. In the later classes complex Celtic Knots and eventually complex geometrical forms are drawn.

Drama

Performing Class plays is seen as an integral part of class cohesion and individual artistic expression. Children perform in many plays during their time at Iona. These plays relate to the curriculum stories which children are receiving in their Main Lessons and are performed at community festivals.

Music/Singing

Music and singing are an important feature of Waldorf education. From Kindergarten upwards the children sing in Ring Time, whilst they are baking, washing hands, tidying away etc. This continues throughout every Main Lesson and MFL Lesson with singing, listening games, recorder playing and simple percussion instruments playing an integral part of all lessons. Music notation begins in Class 4 along with singing in rounds and eventually part singing.

Design Technology and Information Communication Technology

Human culture emerged hand in hand with technology and the hand tools we use today embody a long history of practical wisdom and knowledge of the world and its rhythms.

The basic gesture of technology is the transforming of materials to meet human needs and in the process, transforming human lives and societies. Complex technologies have grown out of simpler, older technologies. We can recognise the evidence of this not only in design and in the machines themselves, but in the language we use, for example terminology in computing that originated in hand-based technologies, such as printing.

The Waldorf technological curriculum begins with handwork and handicrafts and crafting in nature (e.g. building fires, green woodwork etc.). Knowing where materials come from, how they are processed, knowledge of the properties of materials and the uses of tools, first manual and then electric, are preconditions for understanding digital technology as a tool to be used safely and appropriately. Technology is always explored with reference to real human needs and the impact of the environment of sourcing and production.

From as early as kindergarten the children have explored diverse building techniques through playing with wooden blocks, chairs, cloths and natural materials during their play. The children construct intricate forms and learn about balance, pivot points, structural foundations among many other useful hands-on concepts. Children are also introduced to a wide range of simple technologies through their practical creative work starting with cooking and handwork in the earlier classes. As they get older this develops to include gardening, building and woodwork. In these activities they use an increasing range of hand tools and learn how mechanical tools function. Although there are no computers in school for childrens usage, children are taught E-safety. The use of computers

as a tool for research and producing written project work are left until class 5. This is seen as an important aspect of preparing children for their transition to secondary school.

Handwork

The UK Waldorf Handwork Curriculum uses a layered, “learning by doing” approach. Learning new handwork skills and techniques in each successive year, building on the skills previously learned.

Each year classes have a main handwork project which allows them to develop a specific skill. Pupils can express themselves through colour selection, pattern, design and by combining the new project with elements of previously learned skills.

The practical skills pupils acquire also provide them with direct experience of elements of some of the main lesson topics they will encounter in later years such as the industrial revolution where the production of thread, weaving and textiles played a pivotal role.

Children do handwork and craft projects during Kindergarten and through all classes. The children work on meaningful projects which are often related to the seasons and are relevant to the particular age of the child. A whole range of skills are developed through working with the hands, but the process also brings about a strengthening of the will and the capacity for logical thinking. Handwork as a subject lesson then formally begins with knitting in Class 1. The source of the material and traditional craft methods are introduced to the children to give historical and practical context to the activity. Children continue to learn skills such as felting, crocheting, dyeing, sewing, embroidery, and they also make their own toga and cords for their visit to the Class 5 Olympic Games.

Woodwork

Woodwork takes place in Class 5 and begins with observing the variety of wood available on The Land. Children create a variety of woodwork projects and are introduced to the processes of carving, whittling, and sanding, whilst learning about the handling of tools and safe working practices.

Art

The Waldorf curriculum practices two modes of artistic activity:

1. Aesthetics: based on artistic exercises in colour, line and form in which children learn the qualities and techniques of the media (e.g. water colour painting, form drawing). This approach is experiential (colour exercises, basic forms with elaborations). These are deemed to be formative experiences.
2. Art as mode of expression and communication (including illustration). Once children have learned the qualities of the media and techniques, they have opportunities to practise these freely.

Art is used in the main lesson in both of these functions, but also in designated art lessons. At Iona art is taught by a specialist art teacher from Class 4 onwards.

Painting lessons involve the teaching of the techniques which enable the pupils to improve their handling of wet on wet water colours. In the early stages, children are left free to experience the mixing of primary colours on the wet paper, then the pupils practise colour exercises and later they paint using themes from Main Lessons. Wax crayons are used most days by the children to illustrate stories and themes from the main lessons. Children use beeswax to model objects and scenes from the Main Lesson content from Kindergarten (children aged 5) upwards and from Class 4 onwards children are introduced to working with clay to model animal forms and then pots. They are also introduced to drawing with chalk and oil pastels.

Modern Foreign Languages (MFL)

Learning two other languages from the age of six onwards has been an important aspect of Waldorf education since its inception. In an age in which interpersonal and multicultural understanding is vital, becoming fluent in two other languages is not only pragmatically useful but enables us to encounter the other in very different ways – no matter what language they speak. Waldorf education works on the assumption that there is a universal dimension of human experience that is non-linguistic, that ultimately enables us to understand each other, because we share a basic humanity, whether we are economic migrants seeking a livelihood, refugees fleeing conflict, the barista in a bar we visit on holiday, a business partner or a film maker from another part of the world. Learning two other languages offers pupils the opportunity to experience the world and our common humanity not just from a single, mono-cultural perspective but from three (and perhaps more) perspectives. Learning other languages expands our view of the world and counters. It opens us to other cultural perspectives, makes us more rounded persons, more capable of appreciating complexity. Even when translation software makes communication possible without learning the language, this expansion of perspective and rich insight through other languages will still be a vital skill in appreciating difference.

The children learn one other language from Kindergarten onwards, in regular lessons in which the children are engaged in classroom activities they enjoy and are familiar with, all conducted in the target language. Translation is unnecessary because we all understand what is going on. This warm, friendly, enjoyable immersion enables children to understand and learn to speak the language in context through participation in the activities. Pupils become relatively fluent in conversational language and can talk about their lives and activities using sentences that express a variety of times (past, present, future) and with a range of vocabulary that covers many of the things and activities they are familiar with. Until Class 4 children only learn orally. Then, they are introduced to literacy, using authentic texts and material.

The language learnt is decided with reference to the class teachers' choice.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC)

Spirituality is about seeing the higher potential of humanity, of the other and of oneself. It involves relationships, and can also be described as connectedness – to ourselves, each other and the world around us. Religious or spiritual experiences are those that can bring a sense of transformation and of awe and wonder. Spirituality fosters aspects of social and ecological responsibility, humanity, values, empathy, acceptance, curiosity and interest.

To bring a sense of spirituality in all that we provide as learning opportunities for the children, we can ask the question: How does this theme / story / object / festival etc connect with a sense of self, of each other and of the world around us, both seen and unseen? This connectedness deepens learning and gives lasting impact to the curriculum content. Some examples might include:

- In a science or history topic, hearing the biography of famous scientists that include challenges they had to overcome, their personal values and beliefs with links to philosophy, ethics, religion, art and nature.
- Experiencing the ongoing evolution of ideas – for example time in maths, where minutes and hours are what we have now as part of a whole continuum of past, present and future.
- Observing in maths, the laws of geometry within an un-curling fern.
- Bringing real people and real lives into human-based study – from experiencing festivals around the world to meeting religious leaders in person.

Personal, Social, Health Education (PSHE)

PSHE takes place as a taught subject. It has clear learning intentions that are planned across each half term. Some elements are also covered by the class teacher as themes/questions arise. During taught PSHE sessions we cover our British Values curriculum, SMSC development and religious education. One very important element of PSHE

is preparing children for transitions. Ensuring they have a positive experience to enable them to move through the different stages of school and life seamlessly.

Religious Education

Specific main lessons have a particular focus on particular spiritual or religious traditions, or on moral or ethical questions; for example stories from the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and Buddhist traditions are often used extensively in class 5 (Y6). In class 4 the morality of the many Norse gods might be explored.

As a Waldorf school, we are not a faith or religious school. We do not have active worship. What they do have is time for reflection and spiritual connection. We begin every day / main lesson with a verse and reflective moment. This comes in the form of prayer and verses. Fairy tales and stories told have religious content.

We have assemblies linked to our calendar of festivals, these foster the spiritual and moral well-being of the children through a strong sense of belonging regardless of faith or background. The festivals celebrated are all of religious foundations, these include multicultural festivals. These can and have consisted of; the Hindu festival of Diwali, Hanukkah as part of Judaism, Lunar New Year and Holy days as part of many cultures/religions, Ramadan and Eid as part of the Islamic religion. Each year these are discussed and decided upon with College.

Games/Gym

In Classes 1 and 2 children practise clapping rhythms, simple chasing games and playground activities such as skipping and hopscotch. The emphasis is on social cohesion, coordination, balance and strengthening gross motor skills. In classes 3-5, when the games lesson is timetabled as a separate lesson, chasing games form the basis for exercise and social interaction. As part of their study of Ancient Greece Class 5 pupils take part in the annual Steiner Olympics. They learn how to throw the javelin and discus, practise high and long jump and running.

Eurythmy (taught if there is capacity)


Eurythmy is an art of movement that engages the whole human being. It aims to harmonise the child's physical wellbeing, with their feelings or emotions. In the lesson the children move to live music, poetry, and prose text and this experience deepens their aesthetic appreciation of literature and music which support other aspects of the curriculum. With growing differentiation the children learn an alphabet of movements (shapes the arms perform and flow forms which guide them as a whole group in the room) to assist them in the process of individuation, while becoming ever more sensitive to the social organism of the whole class.

Issue Date

This policy takes effect from September 2019. Renewal from April 2024.

Review Date

This policy will be reviewed and revised by the school manager on a three yearly basis.

Name:	Mrs Louise Lipman
Position:	Trustee
Signed:	
Date:	30/4/2024

Related Policies

- Feedback, marking and Assessment Policy

Appendix 1

EXEMPTIONS AND MODIFICATIONS REQUESTED FROM THE LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENT & ELG /EYFSP

In the exemptions application form, we have asked to explain why exemption is needed and how the exemption will affect children’s experience: In brief and to add to the information below:

Parents carefully and deliberately choose Steiner education in order to give their children a broad, rich and imaginative early childhood experience in mixed age groups. The education and care is holistic, enabling and provides for their diverse skills and abilities, concentration and enthusiasm. They do not acquire skills through any formal or teacher directed learning, but at their own pace through the example of well trained and competent adults in an enabling environment in which they develop life skills and which offers effective foundations for later formal learning. The children transfer to Steiner (or Primary) schools socially competent and good communicators, with excellent physical abilities and skills. They are generally enthusiastic and able to give purpose and direction to their lifelong learning.

The learning and development requirement (educational programme, early learning goal, profile assessment) affected	Exemption/modification requested	Rationale
<p>Communication and Language: Understanding: Children follow instructions involving several ideas or actions. They answer ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions about their experiences and in response to stories or events.</p>	<p>b) Understanding: Children follow instructions involving several ideas or actions. They demonstrate understanding in response to stories or events or when recounting their experiences.</p>	<p>The Steiner EY curriculum seeks to nurture and protect the child’s imaginative world and direct teaching, questioning and reminding is seen as running counter to this. Although the teachers may answer children’s questions, these initially stem from the child’s own experiences and self-initiated learning. Teachers do not ask how and why questions to stimulate consciousness, or extend learning.</p>
<p>Physical development. Moving and handling: Children show good control and co-ordination in large and small movements. They move confidently in a range of ways, safely negotiating space. They handle equipment and tools effectively, including pencils for writing.</p>	<p>Children show good control and co-ordination in large and small movements. They move confidently in a range of ways, safely negotiating space. They handle equipment and tools effectively, including crayons for mark making.</p>	<p>As children are not taught to read and write before rising 7 in the Steiner Setting, they are not provided with a full range of writing materials or any formal instruction. Children have the opportunity for mark making as in most cases crayons and paper is available. A range of arts and crafts contribute to the development of fine motor skills necessary for writing in the future.</p>

<p>Mathematics: Numbers: Children count reliably with numbers from 1 to 20, place them in order and say which number is one more or one less than a given number. Using quantities and objects, they add and subtract two single-digit numbers and count on or back to find the answer. They solve problems, including doubling, halving and sharing.</p>	<p>Children orally count reliably with numbers from 1 to 20, place them in order and say which number is one more or one less than a given number. Using quantities and objects in everyday activities and play, they add and subtract two single digit numbers and count on or back to find the answer. In everyday activities and play they solve problems, including doubling, halving and sharing.</p>	<p>Steiner settings do not teach number recognition (from written numerals) or written number formation before rising 7. Steiner children might not have the opportunity to see or recognize written numbers: there are generally no clocks, the scales used are generally balance scales, and measuring is done without using measuring jugs with numbers. It is an established principle in the Steiner EY curriculum that a sound foundation for grasping mathematical concepts comes from allowing the young child to first experience opportunities to count, calculate and problem solve in naturally occurring everyday situations. The Steiner EY curriculum integrates mathematical concepts and uses mathematical language and concepts through regular everyday activities and routines of the kindergarten that involve the child in, for example; pairing up the shoes when tidying up; weighing and measuring ingredients when preparing food, counting plates when setting the table for snack time.</p>
<p>Understanding the world: Technology: Children recognise that a range of technology is used in places such as homes and schools. They select and use technology for particular purposes.</p>	<p>Children recognise that a range of simple or mechanical everyday technology is used in places such as homes and schools. They select and use technology for particular purposes.</p>	<p>The Steiner belief is that electronic technology, such as TV, computers, tape recorders or electronic toys runs counter to their aim to develop the imagination and nurture the child's cognitive capacities by physically learning through doing. Children instead use technology that provides direct experiences enabling them to gain knowledge of how things work.</p> <p>Computers are only introduced later in the Steiner curriculum on the grounds that passive activity is not healthy; it takes away time to play; there are problems associated with young children dwelling in virtual reality that can lead to confusion/distortion of values and that it can lead to the over-reliance on the computer as a teaching/learning tool</p>

<p>Expressive arts and design: Being imaginative: Children use what they have learnt about media and materials in original ways, thinking about uses and purposes. They represent their own ideas, thoughts and feelings through design and technology, art, music, dance, role play and stories</p>	<p>Children use what they have learnt about media and materials in original ways, thinking about uses and purposes. They represent their own ideas, thoughts and feelings through design and nonelectronic technology, art, music, dance, role play and stories.</p>	<p>Steiner site that research has shown that human speech and live music have many advantages over recorded speech or music in that all the senses of the child are addressed at the same time and that live music supports the development of the brain. They also believe that recorded sound is not necessary in a setting where the human voice is heard.</p> <p>The Steiner belief is that electronic technology, such as TV, computers, tape recorders or electronic toys counter the effect of their aim to develop the imagination and nurture the child's human relationship to others.</p>
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<p>Literacy: The Programme is: Literacy development involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.</p> <p>The two goals are: i) Reading: Children read and understand simple sentences. They use phonic knowledge to decode regular words and read them aloud accurately. They also read some common irregular words. They demonstrate understanding when talking with others about what they have read. j) Writing: Children use their phonic knowledge to write words in ways which match their spoken sounds. They also write some irregular common words. They write simple sentences which can be read by themselves and others. Some words are spelt correctly and others are phonetically plausible.</p>	<p>Complete exemption from the whole literacy educational programme.</p>	<p>It is an established principle in Steiner EY curriculum that young children are not taught to read and write before rising 7. Children are told stories rather than read to because the spoken, rather than the printed word, allows the teachers to tell the story in their own words to suit the group of children in their care, and for the children to develop their own imaginary pictures to accompany the story, as well as to develop concentration and a broad vocabulary from the stories told. Steiner say that well-chosen words and good syntax support clear thinking and lay secure foundations for developing language and literacy.</p> <p>The Steiner curriculum introduces formal reading and writing at a later age preferring in the early years to put in place the foundations for reading and writing through developing listening skills and exploring sounds through speech development, and developing fine motor skills through play and everyday activities.</p> <p>Children have the opportunity for mark making, but the written word is not formally introduced, although the child’s self-initiated writing is supported by the teacher when asked by the child. In most cases children do not have access to pencils, rather the preferred Steiner block or stick crayons are used. The books available are mostly picture books and children are encouraged to ‘read the pictures’ using their imagination stimulated by the pictures. The children know that print carries meaning from seeing adults using writing in the daily routine of the kindergarten.</p> <p>Children’s language development is encouraged by the teacher modelling good language during every day activities, a broad vocabulary through storytelling, and using a range of poems, songs and stories in a daily movement and music session.</p>
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<p>ASSESSMENT AT THE END OF THE EYFS: THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE PROFILE (2.6-2.11)</p> <p>This section is for Independent Steiner schools and settings <u>not in receipt of the funding</u>, or who's Local Authority has agreed that it will not affect the funding.</p>	<p>Complete exemption from the whole section on assessment at the end of the EYFS –Early Years Foundation Stage profile 2.6: completion of the profile including 2.7; 2.8; 2.9; 2.10 2.11: submitting profile to LA</p>	<p>Steiner conduct their own continuous observational assessment of the social, physical, spiritual and emotional development of the whole child in accordance with the Steiner ethos' developmental stages of the child. Observational assessments, which are usually recorded in a Steiner child profile, is an integral part of their practice and is an essential tool for practitioners in order to gain an overview of the child. The profile is particularly relevant when the child is about to move up to Class 1 (age 6+) in the Steiner school, where a summative evaluation of the child is passed on to the Class 1 teacher and shared with parents. The child's developmental progress is discussed regularly with parents in the form of individual meetings and written reports.</p> <p>To complete and submit the EYFS profile against goals, some of which conflict with the Steiner curriculum, (and from which they are exempt), is incompatible with their method of assessment. The children from schools that have requested exemption from the profile generally remain in Steiner schools and continue to Class 1 at rising 7 therefore the profile is not needed to inform Reception or Year 1 teachers in mainstream schools. If they do transfer to other schools, a thorough report is given to the next teacher via the parents.</p> <p>Parents also object to their child being assessed and the data collection on a set of goals (the ELG profile scores) which are not fundamental to Steiner Waldorf ethos and practice.</p>
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