

THE OLDER CHILD IN THE STEINER WALDORF SETTING : THE EMBEDDED CURRICULUM

Indicative outline & some examples showing the curricular purpose of activities for children of 5 and 6 years and what adults could do to support learning and development.

(Read in conjunction with SWSF *STEINER Interpretation and Readover Document 5 – 6 years*. This links to the Independent School Standards)

The Steiner Waldorf ethos involves providing an extended early childhood, where children have the opportunity to embed the basic skills (physical, emotional, social and cognitive), and develop lifelong learning habits which enable them to become enthusiastic, imaginative, resilient, creative students who are eager to learn.

Steiner kindergartens include a broad age range, and children remain within the 'kindergarten phase' (the first phase of childhood) until the September following their 6th birthday. The curriculum for their last year in the kindergarten should be differentiated, and there are certain expectations of the older child which are outlined in the chart below – although some of these might be what younger children can already do, the adults differentiate and extend the activities, and they have different expectations of the older children.

Children are not 'made ready' for school, but skills are embedded in order to facilitate a gentle transition to the formal learning stage which we believe should take place after their 6th birthday.

Adults carefully monitor the all-round development of all children, and thought is given to the older children in providing specific adapted and differentiated tasks and activities across all areas in order to develop, strengthen or enhance skills and abilities such as:

Physical co-ordination 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.

The charts below list **some** of the activities and practices in the setting and relates them to what and how the children learn. The setting itself is an enabling environment, not only through the equipment provided, but in the activities, songs, stories, rhythms, and content provided by the adults, who begin to address the older children with more authority and guidance.

The children build on what they already know and can do, however the expectation is that they show progress, take leadership roles, extend their own learning through exploration and discovery, become more articulate, are able to self-regulate and be empathetic, become physically aware and grounded, and are resilient, keen learners.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE and LITERACY

The children learn to:	How they learn:	The adults:
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Listen and respond appropriately to adults and their peers	<p>The rich language used throughout the activities in our curriculum give plenty of opportunities to extend development of;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly articulated speech New languages Listening skills Widened vocabulary Understanding behind the meaning Empathy with the speaker Appropriate ways to respond to both adults and children Respect for each other Negotiation Introduce own ideas Play with rhythms, rhymes, puns, nonsense words etc. <p>Some activities older children are competent in and lead on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Story-time/Puppet-shows – organising others, telling stories, setting up show Ring-time – fluent in songs etc. Play/theatre – acting out parts, directing Craft activities- helping others, developing own ideas Domestic activities – explaining to younger children how and why, including setting the table and other sequences Tidy up - sorts and sequences, shows others Snack time preparation – e.g. explains why jam or butter, or what the food of the day is, and leads on preparation Role play (real world situations e.g. family, shops, garage) Garden time- shows possibilities Eurythmy – is competent Age appropriate drawing – initiates drawing ideas and explains them Form drawing and shapes and patterns Introduction to other languages <p>Our seasonal and/or multicultural festivals provides learning, understanding and experiences of different seasons, cultures, countries, individuals and children take an active part in preparing for these.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen to children Model good clear speech Respond appropriately to questions Remind children to use their ears for listening Model the flexibility, subtlety and fun of language
Build vocabulary and use it appropriately		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help understanding by using alternative words/phrases Use wide vocabulary Correct language or speech by repeating words/mirroring correct speech
Articulate and justify answers, arguments and opinions.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oversee situations while allowing children opportunity to take a lead in resolving everyday disagreements etc. Provide alternative suggestions
Consider and evaluate different viewpoints, attending to and building on the contributions of others.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Model good listening skills Allow time and encouraging others to speak or respond if necessary
Give well-structured descriptions, explanations and narratives for different purposes, including for expressing feelings.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Model appropriate narrative
Maintain attention and participate actively in collaborative conversations, staying on topic and initiating and responding to comments.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pays attention to conversations and guides where necessary
Use spoken language to develop understanding through speculating, hypothesizing, imagining and exploring ideas. Sharing ideas with others and adapting and incorporating new concepts in play and other activities.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use 'I wonder' Introduce new activities to support play, such as 'what about building...' or 'do we need tickets?'
Speak audibly and fluently with an increasing command of Standard English.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Model good spoken English, particularly for EFL children
Participate in discussions, presentations, performances, role play, improvisations and debates.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce new topics in story form Support enquiry
Gain, maintain and monitor the interest of the listener(s)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Storytelling skills
Learn verses, songs and rhymes in other language Appreciate that others may use different languages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce verses, songs and rhymes in other languages where possible 	

Manipulates writing and drawing materials with confidence and correct grip, forming letters and sometimes words such as names	Children are encouraged to hold drawing and writing materials properly, and when they write name, or ask to do so, are shown appropriately by the practitioner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Models and corrects pencil grip, handling materials Provides materials Supports child initiated enquiry/writing etc.
Listen to and understand more complex stories, developing their awareness of narrative forms, characters and cultural conventions.	Children are expected to sit quietly and listen to stories – both told and read stories. They will use these as the foundation for creating their own stories in play.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a variety of stories of different kinds Ensure that the stories include rich and diverse examples of vocabulary – including cognitively demanding language Provides materials for children to create own puppet stories

MATHEMATICS

The children learn to:	How they learn:	The adults:
Count – orally	Through our daily work/curriculum the children practice and learn through practical and hands-on, everyday activities. They develop: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> love of number form, patterns problem solving, shape, space and measures mark making or early writing of number Activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baking – weighing, measuring flour/liquids etc. Setting the table – right number of stools, cups, plates etc. Free play including role-play of; Shops, Banks, Bus journeys – use of money, quantity, time etc. Drawing - mark making and early writing (letter recognition) Building ‘houses’, dens, vehicles etc. – shapes and geometry, size and weight Craft activities – geometry, size, shapes etc. Finger knitting, plaiting, knotting, weaving etc. Garden work – geometry, weight, measures Ring-time & Games – numbers, geometry, shapes, weight, size etc. Eurythmy – includes songs/stories/movement for quick, slow, tall, short, numbers etc. Tidy time (sorting, patterns, weights) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce counting rhymes, games etc Support children’s interests in number
Identify one more and one less of a given number		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plays number games
Join in with number rhymes and/or games involving addition/subtraction		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Models mathematical language in daily activities
Use language of more/fewer/less		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses mathematical vocabulary, models language
Use language such as; more than, less than (fewer), most, least		
Recognize and use words and/or shapes of ‘half’ and ‘quarter’		
Recognize and use language of long/short, longer/shorter, tall/shorter		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduces maths in daily activity such as counting in baking, measuring in cooking etc.
Recognize and use language of heavy/light, heavier than, lighter than		
Recognize and use language of full/empty, half, more than		
Recognize and use language of quick, quicker, slow, slower, early, earlier		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Model language
Recognize and use language of time – hours, minutes		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timekeeping
Recognize the value of money		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Play, shopping Daily activity, register
Recognize and use language of days, weeks, months, years		
Recognize geometry and different shapes Use positional language, Under/over/behind/round		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Models language when drawing, tidying, ringtime, etc. Demonstrate and discuss finger knitting, plaiting, knotting, cord making, weaving etc.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

The children learn to:	How they learn:	The adults:
Show care and empathy towards humans, animals and the environment	Through modelled expected behaviour from the teachers, the children learn:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Model behaviour
Observe, explore, question,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Care and empathy towards each other, animal, plants and our environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Show awareness in general observations
Use manual equipment such as hand drills, saws, beaters, knives, grain mills, apple press, spinning tops, weaving looms, carding machines or carders,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● mend broken toys & equipment ● grow, prepare and make their own food 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mend and care using a variety of equipment (wash windows and cloths, dust and sweep, polish, prepare food)
Recognize plants and animals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use equipment such as a manual grain mill to grind wheat for the bread baked in kindergarten. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Articulate
Recognize and use a variety of materials including; wood, wool, water, stone, clay etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● pick, clean and press apple juice, using a manual apple press. ● help in the garden and learning to identify plants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide equipment and model use, (e.g. collect sheeps wool, clean, card, dye, wash, felt or spin into wool for weaving or making cords)
Experience the four seasons through everyday activities, ring times, stories, crafts, festivals, celebrations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Where does dust/dirt come from, and go ● Composting and recycling <p>Activities:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Introduce seasonal activities ● Decorate room ● prepare nature tables (including collecting seasonal materials)
Experience all kind of weather and learn about weather and appropriate clothing	<p>Craft and everyday activities – scissors, needles, weaving looms etc. Woodwork - saws, drills, hammers etc.</p> <p>Children spend time outdoors - all year around. In this way they become aware of weather, temperature, seasons</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide opportunity for outdoor experiences of weather ● Take children on outings, such as to grain mill or farm ● Introduce processes, (e.g. from planting wheat, to harvesting, winnowing, grinding, making flour, to baking bread, eating, putting crumbs for birds or composting)
Takes responsibility for certain specific tasks and activities	<p>Light candles - use tapers, be aware of the dangers of fire and correct use of equipment</p> <p>Set the table and serve others, wash up and tidy after snack or meals</p> <p>Take leadership roles including run errands - take registers to office, photocopy, fetch materials</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Model and explain dangers of fire, burning, and correct use of equipment to light candles for instance. ● Give suitable tasks on regular basis such as running errands or watering plants, setting the table, washing up, tidying the cloakroom, supporting younger children, fetching materials/food supplies etc. ● Provide opportunities for older children to model behaviour and take leadership roles

CREATIVE AND AESTHETIC

The children learn to:	How they learn:	The adults:
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Use a range of materials creatively.	<p><i>Our entire curriculum is built on experiential learning. The older children are also examples for the younger children, and take a lead in many of the activities.</i></p> <p>Story-time/Puppet-shows & Ring-time – lots of poems, rhymes, singing and use of instruments</p> <p>Play/theatre – set up and take part of a play, singing, play instruments, plays out real world situations – journeys, birth of sibling, holidays, building house, plumbing, harvesting</p> <p>Craft activities – sewing, cutting, modelling, drawing, painting (wet-on-wet painting) wood work</p> <p>Domestic activities – chop vegetables and fruit, prepare and cook food to share, bake, clean, mending</p> <p>Role play & Free play – in-doors and out – plenty of opportunities to be imaginative, build structures, set up plays/puppet-shows etc.</p> <p>Garden time – garden play, climbing, digging (use of correct tools), wood work, mending tools and equipment, skipping</p> <p>Building small worlds in sand or garden out of natural materials taken from the environment</p> <p>Eurythmy – includes songs, poems, music, silks etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepares the curriculum content • Learns stories to tell • Provides and performs puppet shows • Models crafts, painting and drawing • Models correct use of tools and activities • Provides for seasonal, cultural and religious festivals and engages families in the process • Provides an enabling environment, including suitable equipment and toys • Provide appropriate seasonal displays
Draw to express their experiences and out of imagination		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Models drawing and correct pencil grip using a variety of implements
Paint to express their experiences and out of imagination		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Models painting and correct preparation, cleaning and use of paints and brush
Sculpture in clay, wood, sand, wax		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a variety of modelling materials and models use
Design of different projects in different materials (textiles, felt, wool, wood, clay)		
Singing		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepares seasonal ring times
Poems and rhymes		
Use / make / listen to instruments		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides opportunities to use musical instruments such a lyre, glockenspiel, recorder and other percussion instruments

HUMAN AND SOCIAL

The children learn to:	How they learn:	The adults:
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Design	<p>Our curriculum encourages children to explore, make, design, build and evaluate.</p> <p>In their play the children build, knock down and build again – improving parts that were instable/unsafe etc. before.</p> <p>Children bring in fruit and veg to share with the group. They take part in the daily preparation and cooking of the food we share in kindergarten and with that learn the important of nutrition and wholesome food. Story time/puppet-show and ring times brings knowledge about past and present, seasons and weather, people from far and near, living in huts or castles, village or city, work on a farm or in a shop etc.</p> <p>Books that include stories about different parts of the world, different families and children’s lived experiences</p> <p>Craft activities – designing and making by sewing, cutting, modelling, drawing, painting (wet-on-wet painting) wood work</p> <p>Domestic activities – chop vegetables and fruit, prepare and cook food to share, bake, clean, mending</p> <p>Role play & Free play – in-doors and out – plenty of opportunities to be imaginative, build structures, set up plays/puppet-shows, build train/car tracks, construct obstacle courses etc.</p> <p>Garden time – Enhances physical co-ordination in garden play, climbing, digging, wood work, mending tools and equipment, skipping. By spending extensive time outdoors every day, the children learn about weather and seasons.</p> <p>Eurythmy – supports the children to experience left/right, up/down, near/far</p> <p>Festivals provide learning, understanding and experiences of different seasons, cultures, countries etc. Children can be examples for the younger children.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide suitable activities and equipment and model use
Make & Evaluate		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide help with activities
Use real, manual tools (scissors, saw, drill, needle, knife, wheelbarrow etc.)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support children to explore use of different buildings, such as constructing houses, castles, boats
Build structures		
Explore safety, stability etc.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Make sure H&S and risk assessments are done
Appreciate and take part in cooking and nutrition		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide a wide range of different books
Locational knowledge		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prepare food, cook and model equipment use
Identify seasonal/daily weather patterns		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Go for walks and outings
Recognize physical features including; beach, cliff, coast, forest, mountain, sea, river, season, weather		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Observe and remark on clothing or weather
Recognize features including; city, village, factory, farm, house, office, harbour, shop etc.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Model language
Aware of maps (countries, seas etc.)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Awareness of and interest in environment or travel
Be aware of near/far, left/right		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explore or enquire, e.g. holidays
Be aware of the past, using common words and phrases relating to the past time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Model with bean bags or circle games 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reflection, use language ● Organise festivals ● Explore local culture and surroundings

PERSONAL, SOCIAL, HEALTH AND ECONOMIC

The children learn to:	How they learn:	The adults:
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<p>About the importance of health and wellbeing. Children will learn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • about the importance of looking after their environment, keeping it clean and tidy • about the significance of warmth, cold, clean and tidy <p>Children should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • know how to keep themselves clean and look after their belongings and the belongings of others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our curriculum offers extensive opportunities to develop self-care skills. To look after the environment in a range of ways, including gardening and sustainable living, tidying, cleaning and other essential life skills. • Growing and preparing food enables children to develop an understanding of good nutrition and what we need for our wellbeing • Free play enables them to listen to one another and to understand about touch, personal space and boundaries • Golden rules about social interactions enable the children to develop their understanding of how they are feeling and build on their growing theory of mind and empathy to enable them to understand the perspectives of others • Stories and books – will often include examples of different kinds of relationships, examples of different kinds of families and ways of life. They also may involve opportunities for children to develop their emotional intelligence. • Eurythmy and circle games – include opportunities for healthy touch, for developing understanding about boundaries, for developing positive sense of self and sense of belonging • Festivals – foster sense of being part of a community • Outings – staying safe (including road safety), managing boundaries, caring for the world around us and positive interaction with local community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model caring for themselves and the environment • Support the children’s self care encouraging independence • Plan and organise growing and preparing food and composting etc • Support children’s negotiation during free play, encouraging them to solve problems and listen to each other • Provide opportunities for children to take responsibility
<p>Emotional Health – self-esteem/awareness Children will learn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to tell how people are feeling • What ‘privacy’ means • Develop self-respect and self-worth <p>What to do if they are feeling unsure about something Children should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be able to show some self-awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Golden rules about social interactions enable the children to develop their understanding of how they are feeling and build on their growing theory of mind and empathy to enable them to understand the perspectives of others • Stories and books – will often include examples of different kinds of relationships, examples of different kinds of families and ways of life. They also may involve opportunities for children to develop their emotional intelligence. • Eurythmy and circle games – include opportunities for healthy touch, for developing understanding about boundaries, for developing positive sense of self and sense of belonging • Festivals – foster sense of being part of a community • Outings – staying safe (including road safety), managing boundaries, caring for the world around us and positive interaction with local community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose books and stories that reflect diversity • Provide eurythmy/circle games to encourage a sense of belonging and co-operation • Foster an attitude of caring for one another • Plan and organise a diverse range of festivals
<p>Parts of the body Children will learn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • about their bodies and how they work • about the similarities and differences • about appropriate and inappropriate physical contact <p>Children will learn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • about what happens as things grow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eurythmy and circle games – include opportunities for healthy touch, for developing understanding about boundaries, for developing positive sense of self and sense of belonging • Festivals – foster sense of being part of a community • Outings – staying safe (including road safety), managing boundaries, caring for the world around us and positive interaction with local community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise expedition days
<p>Healthy respectful relationships Children will learn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • about the importance of caring friendships and looking after each other • that they can rely on the adults around them for support and develop positive attachments with them • about good manners and courtesy eg taking turns to talk at the table • about loss and change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outings – staying safe (including road safety), managing boundaries, caring for the world around us and positive interaction with local community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that there are opportunities to develop positive friendships with different children/groups of children • Ensure that there are times for one to one interactions between children/ adults in the setting • Model good manners, courtesy and respectful care
<p>Families and ways of life Children will learn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that there are many different kinds of families and ways of life both in the UK and in other parts of the world • to identify their special people (family, friends, carers), what makes them special and how special people should care for one another 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that there are stories and books reflecting diversity • Talk about their own relationships/people in their lives and how they care about them

<p>E Safety</p> <p>Children will learn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • about feeling safe/unsafe and what to do about it • rules around the use of technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stories will help them develop their understanding of feeling safe/unsafe • discussion about the use of technology and who to speak to if they are worried about anything 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide stories that cover themes of being safe/unsafe • Organise discussions about the use of technology • Organise discussions about who children can speak to if they are worried about something • Foster an atmosphere of trust between setting and families
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PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

The children learn to:	How they learn:	The adults:
Move freely, using their whole body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our curriculum offers extensive opportunities to move and become confident in a range of ways, practicing both small and large motor-skills, coordination, agility, balance and co-operation and developing these until children become competent, balanced, aware of risk and able to take risks in a safe way. Physical integration is vital for later formal learning. • Ring-time – physical movements including dancing and games, bean bag games and exercises • Free play – moving things, building, co-operation • Domestic activities – cutting, chopping, cleaning, tidying, baking, cooking • Garden activities and play – garden work, wood work, sand work, digging, climbing, skipping etc. • Eurythmy – includes physical activities of all sort – small/large, quick/slow, dances and games, detailed imitation of complex movements • Outings – routes, road safety, characteristics of and interaction with local community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eurythmy (music and movement) • Go for walks or provides and extends activities outdoors and in
Jumping		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide skipping games
Throwing and catching		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide games with balls or bean bags
Participate in games and dances Participate in activities which help develop small and large motor skills		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides outdoor games • Includes and prepares ring time games and dances • Moves and handles large and small equipment, e.g. building structures • Monitor that older children can climb specific heights or trees • Provides suitable activities such as skipping, or more complicated tasks such as drilling, using woodwork tools, or specific complicated equipment • Encourages older children to take the lead in games, dances, plays
<p>Recognise when they need the toilet, washing hands or cleaning themselves or environment</p> <p>When they are hungry and thirsty</p> <p>Put on/take off appropriate clothing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of warmth and cold, clean and dirty, how to keep things clean and tidy, take a lead in tidy time • Take care of their own and others belongings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourages the older children to help younger with dressing, toileting, washing • Encourages older children to take the lead in tidying or cleaning • Encourages older children tasks such as serving food, pouring drinks, clearing after food, washing and drying, sweeping and cleaning, showing younger children what to do

FURTHER READING

Kindertherapeuticum doc. Dr Edmund Schoorel (SWSF)

The Tasks and Content of the Steiner-Waldorf Curriculum Floris Books

EYFS / Steiner Interpretation and Readover Document (SWSF)

You are not the Boss of Me, WECAN

First Grade Readiness (Resources, Insights and tools for Waldorf Educators) WECAN

Developmental Signatures AWSNA

Ready to Learn, Rose and Rawson Hawthorn Press

Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship www.steinerwaldorf.org