Botton Village School Draft curriculum policy Sept 2009

Introduction

Botton Village Steiner School works with a curriculum based on the pedagogical insights of the Austrian philosopher Rudolf Steiner and on the experience of teachers who have worked with those insights in Steiner Schools worldwide. There are approximately 1,000 Steiner schools globally and over 50 in the UK and Ireland. Steiner's original curriculum indications have been successfully implemented for over 70 years and adapted to local conditions. We are committed to offering an education designed at every level to meet the needs of the pupils at their various stages of emotional, intellectual and physical development, whilst still adhering to clear underlying fundamental principles. We are committed to working with Steiner's developmental insights, which are contained in a series of books and lectures and which form on-going study material for the teachers in our school.

These insights affirm:

1. That each child is a unique individuality with his or her own path in life.
2. That the teachers' aim to remove the obstacles to this path and to support the emerging human beings in our care in developing inner freedom within a healthily functioning body endowed with a rich and coherent feeling life, so as to enable them to make their contribution to society while at the same time unfolding their own human potential.
3. That a threefold methodology recognizing different approaches in Early Years, based on imitation, Lower School based on imagination and Upper School based on ideals needs to be recognized. (even if at present we do not have Upper School facilities at Botton)
4. That artistic rendering by the teacher of lesson content enables all pupils to access the subject offered with enthusiasm and understanding, regardless of ability.
5. That lesson content needs to mirror the pupil's developmental stage. This requires knowledge of what lives within the children and constant flexibility, more so in a combined class situation where the age range of the children may be two years.
6. That lesson content needs to be related back to the human being in a moral and inspiring manner.
7. That the pupils' motivation needs to arise from enthusiasm rather than ambition or fear.
8. That education needs to address the development of thinking, feeling and the will as equal and integrated partners.
9. That measurement of the pupil's progress against external and objective targets must take second place to an assessment of progress that takes into account the child's qualitative experience of life, school and self.

Kindergarten

The aim of the Kindergarten is to build a bridge between home and school by creating a safe, warm, and loving environment. This is to protect wonder and delight up to the age of seven. Teaching works with the children's will, through activity and through imitation. The morning follows a regular rhythm of creative play, songs and counting games, outdoor play and story time, an activity such as food preparation, bread making, painting, modeling, then ring time - including songs and rhymes, morning snack, outdoor play and story time. There is a seasonal rhythm, and festivals are celebrated through the year.

Main School

As we are a small school we combine our classes (two year groups under one teacher) to create the best situation pedagogically, socially and economically. On entering class 1 the children meet their class teacher, who ideally will stay with them until class 8. This continuity of teacher for the first part of each day fosters security and respect in the children and brings the teachers to a deeper understanding of the needs of the individual child.

At this age, and indeed for the next seven years, the children live very strongly in their feeling life. Although they can learn readily what appeals to their artistic sense, they are not yet ready to comprehend purely abstract concepts. Memory is therefore developed, especially through the sense of rhythm, and a strong foundation is given through material being presented, not intellectually, but in a living and pictorial way.

All the core subjects such as English, Maths, History, Geography, Physics, Chemistry, and Biology are studied in depth in block periods of 3-4 weeks in the Main Lesson, which is the first two hours of each day. However, as the curriculum is structured so that the children receive what they need at each stage of their development, these names are not always used, particularly in the early years. For example, History can only be taught as the pupils develop a sense of their own past and Physics and Chemistry only receive these titles as the child learns to observe the environment as separate from itself. In the later years specialist teachers may teach some of the main lesson blocks.

Main Lessons have a regular rhythm, including verses, movement, rhythmic work, recall, new material and written work. Maths and English, music, singing, reading, writing, craft and handwork skill, movement and art will all be developed and woven into the topic.

In addition to the Main Lessons regular practice lessons are given in English, Maths, Spanish or French and German. Practical subjects such as farming, building and gardening are experienced, and there are lessons in woodwork, modeling, handwork, craft, painting, drawing, eurythmy, religion and games. Music and drama play an important part in school life and classes regularly perform plays. Although singing and recorder playing form an integral part of Main Lesson, the children also have music and singing lessons. The children all play the recorder, and

opportunities are available for learning to play a second instrument. They progress from a class orchestra lesson in class 3/4 to a full orchestra involving all of the children in the top two classes. We provide a balance of subject lessons, which include academic, artistic, crafts and physical activities that correspond to the soul faculties in all children with regard to their need to engage in thinking, feeling and will activities.

Class outings take place in connection with the main lesson subjects being taught, for example during farming, local geography, botany, geology, chemistry and astronomy main lessons. From class 3/4 onwards, there is a main annual trip, which takes into consideration the development and age of the children.

Our main aim is that all children who come to this school will be able to participate fully at the appropriate stage in the curriculum for their age and therefore for their development. The curriculum in itself is adaptable and fluid and one of the advantages of continuity of class teacher is that children are able to work in such a way that particular needs can often be addressed by the class and subject teachers.

Differentiation is implemented by various methods in lessons in all subjects.

- Making use of the Steiner three fold strategies of imitation, storytelling (picturing) and thinking.
- Each lesson having a multi-sensory approach; with visual, aural and kinaesthetic components
- Keeping a rhythmic and balanced lesson
- Ensure a variety of activities – from listening to doing.
- Ensuring a child-centred approach ie. Responding to each child as an individual
- Allowing freedom of response to a lesson so that pupils can produce very different work to reflect what they have learnt.
- Ensuring there are tasks ranging from simple to complex, to allow for different abilities.
- Using open-ended questions, so there is no wrong answer.
- Sometimes explaining first and demonstrating after, or demonstrating first and explaining afterwards – allows for different learning preferences.
- Structuring work so that some pupils can be set lower or higher targets and then helped later on if necessary.
- Grouping text on the blackboard in different colours for different groups of pupils to undertake appropriate tasks.
- Encouraging the more able to help their peers.
- Using recall both at the end of the lesson and at the beginning of the next to anchor information.
- Each lesson contains different tasks; for example writing, listening, speaking, drawing, observation, dictation, reading, questioning. The content is differentially approachable.
- Encouraging discussion, exchange of news and reworking with others.

  Each differentiation method is systematic, simple, inclusive and inductive. Each child is helped to contribute in his or her own way to the creation of the whole picture. However,

we all recognise that many children in the context of their normal lessons will need an individual approach in particular areas of work and that at times an assistant will be needed in the classroom. We always try to have assistance for the Kindergarten teacher. We also try to keep up-to-date with relevant courses and publications.

Teachers and the SENCO are careful to monitor the children's progress and growth in self-confidence and there are times when a child will need a timetable to be adapted to allow for extra work, or for a different approach to work. This may be for a short or a long period of time. Help is usually given in a small group or on a one-to-one basis and takes place regularly. At times such help is offered within the context of a lesson but often the child or children will be withdrawn. When many needs are brought to our attention, we may have to prioritise.

In some cases children need support beyond that which we can offer. We are grateful to receive help from anthroposophical doctors, local doctors, educational psychologists, therapists and other professionals when appropriate. We are particularly aware of the need for children to make transitions to and from our school with ease. However, we are not always able to tackle all the needs that are brought to our attention. Sometimes we have to suggest that help is sought elsewhere.

Classes 6, 7 and 8.

The children's emergent intellectual faculties are now ready to be used more consciously, and this year deductive, logical, analytical and critical faculties begin to be required. Physics begins at the end of class 4/5 with Sound. Then in class 6/7 are: Heat, Light and an introduction to chemistry. At the end of 5/6 or beginning of 6/7 is a geology block that can include erosion, volcanic activity, fossil fuels and the formation of mountain ranges. Mainly there is a feeling for the nature of different types of rock, beginning locally with much scope for visits.

Early in class 5/6 the children will reach Alexander the Great in their history, and they will also have two blocks of Rome in this year: from mythology through to the rise of the Roman Empire. They can then wait until early in class 6/7 for the birth and spread of Christianity, the fall of Rome and a shift to the east with Constantine. Then the migration of peoples and the biography of Mohammed, There is scope for work in connection with early kings of England and on invasion, such as with late Roman emperors, the Norman conquest and the reign of Charlemagne. By the end of class 6/7 there is a need, if the class is to leave at the end of class7/8, to have reached the Middle Ages and to have had a block on the voyages of discovery. A geocentric study of the night sky can link with the voyages of discovery.

In class 7/8 there are the Renaissance, Reformation and Revolution to cover and then a thread or connection is found to round off and reach the present day. Biography is an integral part of the work of class 7/8 and can help to cover various aspects of history, as can projects in connection with geography. Major figures are taken from history and geography, but the ordinary person is not forgotten.

Geography progresses steadily from European into World Geography. Human and physical geography are taught and there is a broad sweep of map work and study of climatic zones, mineral resources, an introduction to tectonics, ocean currents and the effect of the ice caps. How the land shapes the people

and how the people have managed their environment. There is often an astronomy block or component of Geography beginning with observation, and moving on to look at the effect of the tilt of the earth. The work begun in Geology and with plants and animals can be extended through geography project work.

In class 6/7, as the outer explorations into the world mirror the child's inner journey, so to it is time to be more conscious of the physical human body. There are lessons in class 6/7/8 beginning with Health and Nutrition, where, in answer to the question: 'what is needed for good health?' many topics can be covered. They could include the senses, sex education, drugs, care of the young and elderly. With these subjects, many teachers feel that as the physiology lessons unfold, there is plenty of scope for pointing out the very wonderful specialisations of the blood, bone structure and organs of the body and for discussion of how best to nourish a healthy attitude towards oneself, in relationships and with respect to personal responsibility.

In class6/7 Mathematics will become more abstract. Algebra is introduced and so is the practical proof of the theorem of Pythagoras and of Pi. There is a practical introduction to Volume. These are then developed as time goes on. There are exercises in perspective which complement the art lessons and graphs which have been begun in lower classes, come from Physics.

In class 7/8 there are often more specialist teachers than in class 6/7. The pupils are gradually being guided into a greater independence and are encouraged to discuss, debate and critically analyse. They can learn a great deal from each other at this stage but the teachers continue to work through biography, by posing questions that are open-ended and by maintaining a feeling of respect for others and for the world. The pupils are finding their place in history. There is often a major project at this time and this can have a biographical component and can last for a large part of the year. Autobiography is also covered, perhaps near to the time of leaving the school.

English Literature is continued as either a subject lesson or in a block or both. As well as seasonal themes, it is likely that a great deal comes from the medieval history block with a study of poetry related to this time, such as The knights of the Round Table, The lady of Shalott, the prologue to the Canterbury tales. The life and works of Shakespeare are taught and there is a major class play that can be from the works of Shakespeare. There is study of rhythm, meter and of how to recognise certain authors, poets and styles of writing. The work on figures of speech, begun in class 6/7, is extended. All subjects give opportunity for exploring literature. Often there is a time to take a subject such as 'Epic, Lyric and Dramatic' and this gives the possibility to read Beowulf, the Iliad, Odyssey or Kalavhala if they have not been taken up earlier.

The pupils continue to be encouraged to write creatively as well as descriptively and to speak verses aloud as a group. This can include working with a piece of drama and directing each other. They write in many different styles, including direct and reported speech. They learn to take notes, précis and analysis of texts. There is organised discussion and debate and presentation of work to an audience.

In class 7/8 science blocks are: Electricity and Magnetism, Mechanics and Metals. There can be some organic chemistry in connection with the nutrition lessons. In maths roots and powers are used and there is an introduction to probability and trigonometry. Algebra and geometry are extended. There is a block often called The Maths of Nature where the pentagon, pentagram and golden section are studied. This

links with the time of Leonardo da Vinci in history. The Platonic solids are calculated and constructed and a textbook is often used for steady revision of all the middle school maths.

In class 7/8 there is a trip abroad, often where a second language can be practised. The children are involved in fund-raising for this. They are also given other responsibilities in the general life of the school.

A Typical Year Plan for Class 6/7 (This one for 2008/9)

Autumn Term (include some astronomy)

Geology	3 weeks and 3 days

Maths- inc. Pi and Pythagoras	3 weeks
Geography –prepare for projects	1 week
Physics- Light	3 weeks
History- Rise and Fall of Rome	4 weeks

Spring Term

World Geography	3 weeks
Maths – Algebra	2 weeks
Physics- Heat	3 weeks
History- Migration and- Middle Ages	3 weeks

Summer Term

History - Voyages of Discovery	3 weeks
Maths revision	1 week
Chemistry	3 weeks
Class Trip	*3 days*
History – round off, plus puppet shows and language play	3 weeks

A Typical Year Plan for Class 7/8 Main Lessons (this one for 2009/10)

Autumn Term

Physics –Electricity and Magnetism with Micky Nef	3 plus1/2 weeks

History - The Renaissance and Reformation 3weeks

Maths – inc. The maths of Nature with Andrew Dyer 3 weeks

Physiology – Health and nutrition 3 weeks

Astronomy shared with Andrew Dyer 4 days

Spring Term

World Geography 2 weeks

Chemistry – Metals with Micky Nef 3 weeks

History – Revolution shared with Andrew Dyer

and Michael Drake (French Revolution) 3 weeks

Physiology – Blood, Respiration, The Senses 2 weeks

Summer Term *with project presentations*

Physiology - inc. Bones with Val Taylor 1 week

Physics – Mechanics with Micky Nef 3 weeks

Class Trip (plus maths revision if time) *2 weeks*

Maths revision, round off history, play rehearsals, projects 3 weeks

Class play, performances, projects 3 weeks

Mary Dyer

Overall Main Lesson Plan for Academic Year 2009 / 2010

Class 3 /4 **Teacher Louise**

Autumn Term

1. **Old Testament:** The story of Moses' life from his birth to his death. The children will produce a Main Lesson book with pictures and writing depicting the story. Some of the writing will be copied from the board, some dictated and some of their own creation. Practise books will be used and then the writing copied up when corrected. The emphasis will be on the spelling of key words and recognising verbs, nouns and adjectives.
   3 weeks

2. **Measure, Shape and Space:** The emphasis will be on 'real-life' situations and calculations. Simple 2D shapes will be explored and found in nature. Potato or carrot picking will extend weights from kilograms to tonnes and catering for a large number of people will need skills in adapting recipes and multiplying. Time will be an ongoing theme and money will be introduced. There will be regular practise with addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, both mentally and pencil and paper methods.

   3 weeks

3. **Crafts and Trades:** This will be continued from last year with other trades/crafts discussed, drawn and written about (connected mainly with animals to link with Main Lesson in the Summer Term, Man and Animal). Modern day trades and crafts will also be discussed. A trip to the Ryedale Museum in Hutton-le-Hole is planned to visit the various crafts exhibited there and the class will spend two nights up at Nook Barn in order to get up early and help with the milking. A Main Lesson book will be produced with pictures and writing. The writing will be mainly of the children's own creation. The emphasis will be on the spelling of key words and recognising verbs, nouns and adjectives.

   3 weeks

4. **Homes and Habitat:** This lesson will be linked very closely to the Man and Animal Main Lesson to be given in the Summer Term. A few animals will be selected and their homes will be compared with those of human beings here and throughout the world. Research on human habitats will be carried out through encyclopaedias and outings to river banks, woods and the moor are planned to investigate the habitats of various birds and mammals. Art work will be closely linked with this lesson and the children will write about their findings.
   2 weeks

5. **Advent:** Form drawing, including star shapes and Christmas crafts will be the main theme. The children will make items to sell at the Christmas Fair. They will man the stall themselves and so practise giving change and adding the price of goods together. Charges for various items will be discussed in class thus promoting healthy debate. An Advent story will be told at the end of each of these lessons.

   2 weeks

Spring Term

1. **Fractions – 1:** The recognition of simple fractions. The children will find and recognise the equivalence between them and compare two simple fractions in practical contexts. The children will go on to proper/improper fractions and be able to read and write all words connected to this. There will be regular practise with addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, both mentally and pencil and paper methods.