



## Curriculum Policy of York Steiner School January 2016

York Steiner School is responsible for providing education for its pupils in accordance with the ideas of Rudolf Steiner. Our intention, with the support of the parents, is to produce well developed, happy fulfilled human beings who are socially responsible and capable of making a contribution to their society and culture.

Our curriculum is largely taken from *'The Educational Tasks and Content of the Steiner Waldorf Curriculum'* edited by *Martyn Rawson and Tobias Richter*

The School aims to provide a full Waldorf Curriculum. The teachers approach this task with imagination, enthusiasm, creativity and an understanding of Steiner's principles and ideas.

### Structure of the curriculum

In the Kindergarten the children learn through free creative play in a carefully equipped environment containing toys and other items made primarily from natural materials. The teacher leads the group in various activities such as baking, painting, modelling, weaving and other crafts, she/he tells a story and leads a ring-time consisting of rhymes, songs and seasonal activities. The children play outside in the garden every day. The day, the week, the term and the year all have a regular rhythm which is strongly connected to the seasons and to the children's developmental needs. Oral numeracy and literacy skills are developed in many informal ways so that when children join class one they are ready to begin formal education.

York Steiner middle school curriculum (classes one to eight) covers all major subject areas. Some subjects however, which are present in the National Curriculum such as Citizenship and Personal Social and Health Education, are present in the Waldorf Curriculum as an integral part of the general social life in the school and within many lessons in each particular class. This is because Steiner Waldorf Education seeks to make the question of human values the central element of the curriculum. Respect for the individual within the group is an attitude underpinning and interlinking every aspect of the curriculum. The class is a model community and in this environment the teacher helps the children to build group cohesion and social awareness. Each class teacher's ongoing commitment to self-development and to the relationship with their class is very important because it brings a depth of knowledge, continuity and trust, which enriches and adds warmth to the delivery of the curriculum.

The curriculum is structured around Steiner's idea of a Main Lesson, which is taught by the Class Teacher during the first two hours of morning school, when pupils are most alert and receptive. The Main Lesson theme runs for three to four weeks and may be Maths, English, Science, Geography or History orientated. Within the two hour session there will be cross curricular work, so that for

instance in a non-mathematical Main Lesson there will be some maths practice (Brain Gym type activities) in the circle time and opportunities to look at mathematical / scientific references will be sought in the main content of the lesson where appropriate. This is intended to give the pupils a more holistic, less fragmented view of the world. It is our aim to emphasise the social, moral, spiritual and cultural aspects of any topic. Teachers will not only discuss how the world is with pupils but also how it could be.

In classes 7 and 8, when children and parents are planning which secondary schools the pupils will move on to, certain aspects of the National Curriculum, such as the methods of testing and assessment are introduced to the pupils. This is intended to familiarise the children with formal testing and help them to make a smooth transition from our way of working into the maintained sector. At this stage pupils are also introduced to the use of Information Technology for research and how computers work. Discussions about choice of GCSE options in relation to individual strengths and weaknesses and career interests will also be a part of the work with class 8. The class 8 play and the trip abroad accompanied by the fundraising this requires are very important 'rounding off' elements in our curriculum.

This policy was approved by Education Mandate on 14th January 2016

Review date: December 2017