



Cambridge Steiner School

Curriculum Policy November 2021

Reviewed by: Sarah Fox

Review date: November 2021

Next review: November 2022

Related Policies and Documents: this policy should be read in conjunction with: [Framework for Curriculum Practice](#) (K. Bransby and M. Rawson); Curriculum Documents, Lower School Assessment Policy and Procedure; The Tasks and Content of the Steiner-Waldorf Curriculum; SEND Policy; SEND Support Ideas; EAL Policy; PSHE and SMSC Education Policy inc British Values Curriculum Statement; RSE Policy; E-Safety Curriculum Outline; Outdoor Classroom Handbook.

Endorsement:

Full endorsement is given to this policy by:

Name: Joel Chalfen

Position: Cambridge Steiner School Trustee

Signed:

Date: November 2021

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1. The Steiner Waldorf Curriculum: Aims and intentions

Curriculum refers to the totality of what students experience during the educational process, including both the explicit and hidden or tacit dimensions. Thus, curriculum includes the school culture, the learning environment, relationships and community as well as what is taught and when and how it is taught. The basic assumption behind curriculum in a Waldorf context is that there is a fundamentally developmental purpose behind the sequence of what, how and when things are taught and learned. Learning situations are arranged in which certain learning processes can occur that serve socialisation, qualification and the individuation process. Curriculum, as the whole educational approach, translates the generative principles into practice that serves the aims and intentions of the education at the local and specific level.

[Framework for Curriculum Practice](#) (K. Bransby and M. Rawson)

'Our aim is to provide a truly inspirational education where our children develop a love of learning and are prepared to go out into our ever-changing world as creative, resourceful and self-confident young people with the life skills to succeed.'

At Cambridge Steiner school we seek to educate the whole person in the three domains of educational purpose by enabling:

- **qualification:** how students acquire the dispositions, skills, knowledge and cultural capital to participate in and contribute to the world of work and civil society,
- **socialisation:** how students learn the dispositions, skills, knowledge and abilities to actively participate in their community and within a multicultural society and be able to establish and maintain coherent identities,
- **individuation:** how students develop agency, judgement, sense of coherence, a feeling for responsibility, ethical dispositions, the ability to orientate their lives, be creative and develop a relationship to spirituality.

Steiner Waldorf education believes that these overarching aims can be achieved through the development of twelve capacities:

Language and communication. The ability to use and understand languages (one's own home language and at least one other), including all forms of orality and literacy, symbolism and the use of signs and logos. Literacy includes digital and media literacy.

Health and wellbeing. This includes feeling at home in one's body, having basic nutritional and emotional needs met, and feeling safe, secure, seen, heard, recognised and understood. Wellbeing is supported by meaningful, trusting relationships and secure attachments. A vital aspect of this area of development is motor skills and physical fluency, as these manifest in all forms of movement, manual dexterity, tool use and gesture.

Senses. Highly developed senses and sensory integration are important for our relationship to the world and our understanding of it. This includes being able to direct our senses towards the world through noticing, attending and focusing on what is salient.

Imagination. The capacity for imagination is an essential aspect of knowledge. Imagination makes it possible to visualise other worlds, in history, in literature, or as scientific hypotheses and enables us to generate visions of a possible future or solutions to complex problems and processes, as well as being the basis for artistic activity.

Empathy. Empathy forms the basis for understanding others, and is the foundation for sociality in a multi-cultural society. It is also the basis for knowing about the world in a phenomenological and participatory way.

Aesthetics. Art is a way of understanding the world. A sense for aesthetics allows us to experience and appreciate the inherent qualities of things and beings in the world, such as colours, shapes, forms, textures, sounds, movement and so on, and to respond to and engage with these in an artistic way. Aesthetics also includes engaging with materials, recognising their qualities and transforming them into artefacts of all kinds through designing, shaping and making.

Enquiry. Being able to ask questions out of curiosity in ways that open situations up and generate knowledge is important to agency. It is the basis for scientific methods and understandings as well as interpretation, symptomatology, artistic activity and research of all kinds.

Democratic participation. The capacity for democratic participation has to be learned through experience of democratic behaviour in all its diversity as well as through understandings of different kinds of societies over historical time and cultural space. Learning about governance in different settings and self-management are important aspects of democratic understanding, along with the ability to recognise what hinders, manipulates and perverts democracy.

Lifelong learning. Lifelong learning involves being able to make sense and meaning of experiences, and apply learning in different contexts. It understands learning as transformation, not merely the retention of facts, information and accounts of the world that can be reproduced if required. Lifelong learning is dependent on motivation, and the capability to reflect, assess and plan.

Future thinking. Future thinking includes not only the ability to aspire to a different future but to be able to plan and take realistic steps towards realising these aspirations. It involves imagination and an understanding of the relationship between the present and the past. It means being able to withdraw from an intractable position in order to engage with problems which are difficult or seemingly impossible to solve.

Holistic thinking and spiritual experience. The capacity for holistic, living, joined-up thinking enables us to recognise patterns, correlations and interactions, and understand complexity and multidimensional phenomena, such as processes over time involving a multiplicity of factors. Spiritual experiences enables us to feel that we are part of something larger and less tangible, informing the deepest values and meanings by which we live, and giving an ethical orientation to our actions.

Judgement. Sound, autonomous judgement, based on knowledge, insight and the weighing up of numerous factors is the basis of ethics and being able to take up positions and the justify and explain them.

Each of the academic subject disciplines contributes to the development of these capacities in a range of ways. For each of the Independent School Standards areas of education, we are developing documents that outline the purpose of study, the aims of the curriculum, and the ways in which each one contributes to the development of the above capacities through its long term curriculum intent.

Waldorf as a skills-based education

We take the view that being able to apply skills always requires knowledge of the context and the relevant tools and materials, and that knowledge is of less value if it isn't applied, even in thinking, i.e. theoretically. We suggest, instead of treating skills and knowledge separately, it is more useful to think in terms of **skills as knowledgeable action with purpose**.

In order to monitor the growth and development of skills across school subjects and in different learning situations, it is useful to have a loose taxonomy of skills - loose because there are many overlaps and the same skill may be performed in different contexts.

Type of skills	Descriptors /some examples
bodily and practical skills	fine and gross motor skills, dexterity, balance and coordination, movement skills, muscle memory, effective tool use in all fields (e.g. needle and thread, carving knife, power drill, laptop, driving a vehicle), practical skills in various fields (e.g. cooking, gardening, household repairs), and craftsmanship
social and personal skills	communicative skills, proficiency in other languages, relationship skills, team skills, expressive skills, inter-cultural skills, sense of fairness and social justice, self-managing and personal organisation skills, empathy, ability to construct and maintain stable identities, acting autonomously, planning for the future, democratic skills
procedural skills	procedural skills, organisational skills, scientific methods, organising and curating information, research skills, presentational skills, aesthetic skills
subject-specific skills	reading, writing, numeracy skills, scientific, technological and artistic skills, historical awareness geographical consciousness etc.

Constrained and unconstrained skills

Our curriculum framework also distinguishes between constrained and unconstrained skills. Constrained skills are the basic skills in a field of learning that are necessary for the subsequent open-ended development of unconstrained skills. Constrained skills are usually only learned through explicit teaching over relatively short periods of a few years, compared to life-long learning of unconstrained skills.

Dispositions and habits of mind

Having a skill means being able to do something that one couldn't do before. Having a disposition and habit of mind inclines one to use that skill and influences whether one uses the skill reluctantly and only when externally necessary (e.g. learning for a test) or willingly (as in expanded learning based on self-motivation). A resilient learner will persist in the face of setback and difficulties and will actively learn from mistakes. A learner disposed to playfulness and creativity will experiment, try out different solutions, be creative. Dispositions also include values and beliefs. If people find skills important and socially and culturally valuable they are more likely to develop dispositions to using them. Values also influence the way we do something. It makes a difference whether where we do something with care and pride in the outcome, with the sense that because if it is worth doing, it is worth doing well, or whether it doesn't personally matter to us how we do something and the consequences this has. Some who takes pride in doing something well may also care for the tools, materials and workspaces, will clear up afterwards, will find pleasure and affirmation in whether others appreciate what we do. Notions such as vocation, service and doing good, as well awareness for the consequences of our actions, are values that enhance skills.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy reflects the requirements for independent schools to provide a broad and balanced curriculum as per the [Independent School Standards](#).

It also reflects requirements for inclusion and equality as set out in the [Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014](#) and [Equality Act 2010](#), and refers to curriculum-related expectations of governing boards set out in the Department for Education's [Governance Handbook](#).

This policy complies with the School's Articles of Association.

In addition, this policy acknowledges the requirements for promoting the learning and development of children set out in the [Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework](#).

It also relates to the qualification specifications for the [Crossfields Institute Level 2 Integrated Education Diploma – Crossfields Institute](#) and [Crossfields Institute Level 2 Integrated Education Extended Diploma – Crossfields Institute](#)

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Trustees

The Trustees will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and hold the Education Manager to account for its implementation.

The Trustees will also ensure that:

- A robust framework is in place for setting curriculum priorities and aspirational targets
- The school has a curriculum which covers a broad range of subject disciplines, delivered through teaching that will enable all pupils to make good progress according to their abilities, and that such progress is properly assessed as part of a continuous process which feeds back into lessons.
- Proper provision is made for pupils with different abilities and needs, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
- The school implements the relevant statutory assessment arrangements
- They participate actively in decision-making about the breadth and balance of the curriculum

3.2 Education Manager

The Education Manager is responsible for ensuring that this policy is adhered to, and that:

- All required elements of the curriculum, and those subjects which the school chooses to offer, have aims and objectives which reflect the aims of the school and indicate how the needs of individual pupils will be met
- The amount of time provided for teaching the required elements of the curriculum is adequate and is reviewed by the Trustees
- They manage requests to withdraw children from curriculum subjects, where appropriate
- The school's procedures for assessment meet all legal requirements
- The trustee board is fully involved in decision-making processes that relate to the breadth and balance of the curriculum
- The trustee board is advised on whole-school targets in order to make informed decisions
- Proper provision is in place for pupils with different abilities and needs, including children with SEND

3.3 Subject Leads

Subject Leads will oversee specific curriculum areas and ensure progress for pupils through the curriculum on their individual school journeys. The Subject Lead is responsible for:

Strategic direction:

- Promoting the subject, its importance, and the value that it brings across the school
- Maintaining a good understanding of how well the subject is being delivered and the impact it has on pupil achievement

- Using this understanding to feed into the school development plan and produce an action plan for the subject
- Promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social, cultural, physical and mental development alongside universal human values in the teaching of the subject
- Consulting pupils, parents and staff about the subject and its effectiveness, and assessing the feedback against the school's values, visions and aims
- Working with the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) to ensure the curriculum matches the needs of different pupils, such as disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)
- Working with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) leader to understand how the subject is developed at the EYFS and to support the EYFS
- Liaising with the SWSF/ sister schools on subject-related events, projects and activities

Leading the subject / supporting staff:

- Developing and reviewing regularly the vision, aims and purpose for the subject area
- Overseeing the planning of the curriculum content (planing trawls), ensuring it is well sequenced to promote pupil progress
- Ensuring the planned curriculum is effectively and consistently implemented across the school
- Making sure there is an effective system of assessment that oversees the progress of pupils to ensure the curriculum has a positive impact on pupils' learning
- Holding team meetings on the subject (minimum termly) to keep staff informed of any developments or changes
- Providing support to staff regarding teaching and learning, resources, and planning in the subject area
- Monitoring teaching and learning by visiting lessons, scrutinising books, and talking with pupils to assess how well the subject area is being implemented and how well it is delivered across the school.

Efficient and effective deployment of resources:

- Auditing, checking and managing resources to ensure they are up to date and match pupil and curriculum needs
- Safe and organised storage of resources
- Supporting teachers to prepare appropriate resources for remote learning to ensure the curriculum can be delivered to pupils learning from home due to coronavirus

3.4 Other staff

Other staff will ensure that the school curriculum is implemented in accordance with this policy.

The Early Years Lead will take specific responsibility for the younger children accessing a broad and balanced curriculum experience.

The Upper School Coordinator and the Lead Upper School Teacher will take specific responsibility for the older children in the Upper School who are working towards Crossfields Institute Level 2 Integrated Education (IE) qualifications.

4. Organisation and planning

Explanation of how the curriculum is organised and delivered in the Lower School at Cambridge Steiner School is structured in the complementary: [Framework for Curriculum Practice](#) (K. Bransby and M. Rawson) and supporting curriculum documents. The school is piloting use of the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship Art of Teaching app to support planning and assessment. Teachers will also make reference to *The Tasks and Content of the Steiner-Waldorf Curriculum* (K. Avison) and other key pedagogical texts.

These documents show:

- The organic nature of the Steiner curriculum approach
- How subjects are designed, delivered and sequenced.
- How our curriculum covers the following:
 - Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
 - British values
 - Relationships and sex education
 - Careers guidance
- Short, medium and long-term planning expectations
- What resources are available to support curriculum delivery
- How our curriculum suits local needs, including how we adapt the curriculum/subjects to suit local context and pupil transition.

See our EYFS documents for how our early years curriculum is delivered.

The Upper School curriculum is being developed to enable students to work towards the Learning Outcomes needed to obtain the [Crossfields Institute Level 2 Integrated Education Diploma – Crossfields Institute](#) and [Crossfields Institute Level 2 Integrated Education Extended Diploma – Crossfields Institute](#)

The learning outcomes cover a broad range of curriculum areas and core skills:

- Natural sciences
- Mathematics
- Computing
- Language and literature
- Global awareness
- Outdoor education
- Art, craft and design
- Movement and physical education
- Performing arts
- Modern Foreign Language
- Creative Thinking Skills
- Independent Project

The curriculum is also aligned with and takes inspiration from other Upper Schools within the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship Upper Schools Network. See subject specifications for further details.

5. Inclusion

Teachers set high expectations for all pupils. They will use appropriate assessment to set ambitious targets and plan challenging work for all groups, including:

- More able pupils
- Pupils with low prior attainment
- Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds
- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL)

Teachers will plan lessons so that pupils with SEN and/or disabilities can study every curriculum subject, wherever possible, and ensure that there are no barriers to every pupil achieving.

Teachers will also take account of the needs of pupils whose first language is not English. Lessons will be planned so that teaching opportunities help pupils to develop their English, and to support pupils to take part in all subjects.

Further information can be found in our Accessibility Plan, EAL Policy and SEND policy.

6. Monitoring arrangements

Trustees monitor whether the school is complying with the Independent School Standards and teaching a “broad and balanced curriculum” which includes the required subjects, through:

- School visits, regular meetings, policy reviews, Education Manager reports, school reports, parent and pupil voice

The Education Manager and Subject leaders monitor the way subjects are taught throughout the school by:

- Planning scrutiny, learning walks, book looks, staff discussions etc.

Upper School is monitored by the Lead IQA from Crossfields Learning and the External Quality Assurance (EQA) from Crossfields Awarding.

Throughout the qualification period and on completion pupil results from the [Crossfields Institute Level 2 Integrated Education Diploma – Crossfields Institute](#) and [Crossfields Institute Level 2 Integrated Education Extended Diploma – Crossfields Institute](#) will be regularly reported to the Education Manager, SLT and Trustee Board.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Education Manager and SLT. At every review, the policy will be shared with the Trustees.