

## Literacy Vertical Curriculum

### Introduction: Literacy

The earliest forms of writing evolved as a way of keeping records and accounts in several areas of the world, approximately 5000 years ago. Once writing began to be used to record complex ideas from religion, mythology, magic, science and history, it also began to be a way that people could record their collective and personal thoughts and feelings, and so literature was born. The transition from orality (including all forms of performative expression including speech, story-telling, song, sacred dance) to literacy, in which thoughts are conveyed using symbols that have a degree of permanency, changed the way people related to the world. With literacy human beings became capable of greater individual awareness, but also of abstraction and logic. If orality gives people access to the world they are embedded in through participation, literacy gives us the gift of reflection, analysis, categorizing and a sense for history (which categorizes events into a sequence). 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 Steiner Waldorf education great emphasis is placed on good, clear, expressive, sensitive and powerful speaking from kindergarten to the upper school. Poetry, drama, story-telling, 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 to represent reality, is a hugely complex process required 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[1]. Steiner 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.

### **Literacy: Purpose of Study**

Literacy is central to full participation in academic, economic and civil society. Good literacy skills (knowledgeable action with purpose) show themselves in pupils' ability to speak and write fluently so that they can communicate their thoughts, opinions, ideas and emotions to others. Reading is an essential pre-requisite for building and using knowledge and is essential for accessing information through media of all kinds, supporting intellectual, emotional, cultural, social and spiritual development. Literature is particularly significant in reflecting traditional and critical values. Oral and embodied communication are equally important in formal and informal settings and professional life.

### **Literacy: Aims**

The overarching aim for Literacy in the Waldorf curriculum is to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written language, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment. The Waldorf curriculum for English aims to ensure that all pupils:

- read easily, fluently and with good understanding
- develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information
- acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language
- appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage
- write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences
- use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas
- are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, presenting their ideas coherently in a range of ways
- express themselves in original and creative ways
- navigate a range of media, and can form judgements about the content of what they encounter

### **Long Term Curriculum Intents**

#### **Language and communication**

- Using vocabulary and syntax effectively
- Using oral and textual structures effectively (e.g. gesture and body language, conversation, narrative, poetry, oration, song, blogs, argument, debate, essay, letter, articles, stories, plays and drama, images, film etc)

- Understanding and using oral and textual features (e.g. communicative intention, rhetorical, poetic and literary devices and their effects, style, standard forms, language of image and film etc)
- Mastery of the power of language to influence others: (e.g. code switching, persuasion and argument, creation of emotional response, performance of drama etc)
- Ability to create mutual understanding and/or transmission of information (e.g. clarity, fluency (reading, writing, speaking, listening and understanding))

### **Health and well-being**

- Reading, writing, listening, watching and performing for pleasure; responding emotionally to literature, orature, drama.
- Ability to consciously use and interpret body language, gesture, facial expression etc

### **Senses**

- Having a sense of and feeling for language
- Being able to translate sensory experience into language (e.g. description of an experience, or mental recreation of an experience from description)

### **Imagination and play**

- Ability to create vivid mental imagery from literature, orature or drama
- Using imagination, recollection and recreation of experience and emotion as a basis for creating literature, orature or drama.

### **Empathy**

- Imagining how the people written about, spoken about or presented (including e.g. characters and historical figures) think and feel, and imagining the relationships between them and their differing perspectives
- Imagining the author and their intentions, experiences and perspectives
- Being aware of and sensitive towards an audience
- Recognising and responding to individual and cultural voices

### **Aesthetics**

- Appreciating language used artistically, beautifully and powerfully
- Using language to create something artistic, beautiful or powerful

### **Inquiry**

- Being curious about the history and etymology of words and language, and the historical context of literature, orature or drama.
- Making sense, making meaning, interpreting, inferring
- Noting, exploring and understanding personal, philosophical and emotional responses to literature, orature and drama
- Researching using information through text and oral communication

### **Democratic participation and society**

- Understanding the power of language and text in shaping and influencing political views
- Understanding how language and text can be used to manipulate people's political thinking

### **Lifelong learning**

- Enjoy engaging with literature, orature and drama as a part of personal and community culture
- Using literacy of all types (including digital) to extend personal knowledge and skills

### **Future thinking**

- Communicating with people from different backgrounds and social positions
- Using language to explore and express different ways of thinking
- Constructing biographical narratives

### **Holistic thinking / Spirituality**

- Appreciating the role of language in spiritual experience
- Using language as a powerful way of connecting with others on many levels
- Using and creating literature, orature and drama in the flow of chronology and geography, connecting people across time and space

- Understanding the role of literature in holding a mirror up to the world

### Judgement

- Literary analysis and criticism. Interrogating purpose, and how purpose is realised through the relationship of form and content.
- Developing and shaping complex arguments, eloquently articulating a stance

### Literacy Age-related Learning Opportunities for C1

### Relevant Learning Descriptors

<p>Children should have the opportunity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To develop a feeling for the rhythm of speaking and listening in different situations, e.g. during classroom talk, conversations, stories etc.</li> <li>• To experience a rich and ambitious vocabulary, exploring connections between new and known words.</li> <li>• To understand that writing is talk on paper, running left to right and top to bottom.</li> <li>• To develop good phonological awareness: recognise and identify alliterations and rhymes, segment and blend orally.</li> <li>• To articulate their experiences and recollections orally in narrative form.</li> <li>• To learn the initial code: recognise and write simple sound/spelling correspondence for lower and uppercase letters.</li> <li>• To write words with phonologically plausible spellings</li> <li>• To read words consisting of sound/spelling correspondences that they know</li> <li>• To learn to write and read some simple but very common words containing unfamiliar sound/spelling correspondences.</li> <li>• To develop a feeling for a sentence, a word and a letter.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Beginning Literacy</b></p> <p>Children can orally communicate their ideas, thoughts and memories in a logical and structured way to make the meaning clear for the listener. They know several verses/poems by heart. Children can 'read' familiar text such as sentences from a known story or a favourite story book. They can use their knowledge of sound/spelling correspondence to read and write simple sentences formed of initial code, in lower case. When writing, their spellings are phonetically plausible and they use some punctuation. They can read what they have written themselves, e.g. during shared or independent writing.</p> <p><b>Book Band:</b> Pink, red, yellow, blue, green</p>
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- To practice composing, writing and reading simple text.

### Literacy Age-related Learning Opportunities for C2

Children should have the opportunity:

- To refine their feeling for the rhythm of speaking and listening in different situations, e.g. during classroom talk, conversations, stories etc.
- To participate in recitation, singly and in groups
- To refine their articulation of thoughts, recollections and experiences orally in coherent narrative form
- To experience a rich and ambitious vocabulary, exploring orthography and connections between new and known words
- To learn extended code, e.g. consonant diagraphs and blends, multiple spellings of vowel sounds
- To learn to read and write common and personal words and words of interest containing unfamiliar sound/spelling correspondences.
- To develop a feeling for structuring more complex and longer sentences, e.g. using pronouns to replace nouns, conjunctions etc.
- To explore the functions of words within sentences.
- To learn how to use capital letters and full stops in their writing, and to recognise and identify some additional punctuation, e.g. question/exclamation marks, commas.
- To practice composing, writing and reading (both independently and aloud) text at an appropriately challenging level and length.

### Relevant Learning Descriptors

#### Early Literacy

Children can orally communicate their ideas, thoughts and memories coherently and appropriately for the listener/situation. They begin to be confident to recite alone. Children can compose and write short, simple texts on a familiar topic, using extended code and common words containing unfamiliar sound/spelling correspondences. They add detail and description, drawing on their reading experiences. Children use some longer, more complex sentences, using punctuation to delineate sentences and identify questions or exclamations, although language and sentence structure may still be close to speech. They can read their own and others' writing, including longer texts and some different genres, e.g. poems, information or letters. They begin to self correct and develop some automaticity, e.g. not following text with a finger when reading; writing familiar words without sounding out.

**Book Band:** Yellow, blue, green, orange, turquoise, purple, gold, white

### Literacy Age-related Learning Opportunities for C3

### Relevant Learning Descriptors

Children should have the opportunity:

- To explain their reasoning and their work
- To recite poems/verses alone; to take part in short plays as part of a group
- To experience a rich and ambitious vocabulary, exploring the meaning of new words, their morphology and their synonyms
- To practice reading and writing the extended code, using their knowledge to formulate correct spellings and pronunciation
- To practise writing and reading in cursive script
- To learn common spelling conventions (e.g. y -> ies; es plurals; CV add ing) and homophones (there/their/they're)
- To explore the morphology of words (e.g. suffixes, prefixes, stem words)
- To identify the function of words in a sentence, e.g. noun, verb, adjective, adverb
- To learn to use a range of punctuation marks
- To respond to, illustrate and discuss both shared and independent reading
- To practice finding information and making inferences from text
- To practice writing longer and more complex sentences and pieces of writing,
- To practice using resources such as dictionaries, word lists, wall displays etc

#### Developing Literacy

Children can explain their thinking and talk about their work. They recite alone and perform speaking parts in short plays. Children can compose, write and structure longer pieces of writing in familiar formats and for different purposes, using resources for support if prompted. They write in developing cursive script, using their knowledge of the extended code and morphology to write plausibly (if not always accurately) spelling familiar words correctly. Children use a range of punctuation to support meaning, for example inverted commas for direct speech. Children read familiar types of material with confidence, such as short chapter books with simple narrative shapes and illustrations. They self select some reading material, moving between familiar and unfamiliar texts in their choices and including information books, comics/graphic novels and age-appropriate magazines/newspapers. They read mostly silently, but at a pace similar to speech.

**Book band:** Turquoise, purple, gold, white, lime, brown, grey

### Literacy Age-related Learning Opportunities for C4

### Relevant Learning Descriptors

Children should have the opportunity:

- To develop a feeling for expressive recitation, including accurate interpretation of punctuation, and the experience of alliteration and rhythm
- To experience a rich and ambitious vocabulary: exploring new words in a range of contexts and investigating etymology and morphology
- To perform in a play, speaking several lines individually
- To practise writing neatly in cursive script with a pen
- To read text in a range of formats and genres, at an appropriate level and length, including to complete tasks in some areas of the curriculum, interpreting illustrations and features such as text boxes
- To identify, summarise and begin to discuss key information from text read independently when prompted
- To connect what they read to their prior and developing knowledge and understanding
- To explore aspects of their responses to different texts and to learn some literary terms for features of both fiction and poetry
- To write in different styles/registers and formats for different purposes and audiences, using careful choice of vocabulary, varying sentence and text structure.
- To learn to identify a range of parts of speech and to use them in their writing (e.g. adjectives, adverbs, prepositions)
- To practise using different tenses accurately in their writing
- To practise using a range of punctuation consistently and accurately in their writing

#### Progressing Literacy

Children talk, read aloud and recite fluently and with expression, performing several lines individually in a play. They read and write independently with some confidence, reading and writing unfamiliar words correctly using a range of strategies to self correct and work out spellings, pronunciation and meaning. Children read silently, increasing their pace and stamina, reading longer and more demanding texts with enjoyment. They are able to identify and select information relevant to a topic and verbally summarise their ideas about what they have read or written. Children are becoming more active readers, beginning to ask and answer questions about how text is constructed, and how they respond to it, and starting to go beyond purely literal interpretation and understanding. This understanding begins to show in their writing, where they adjust and develop language and content to suit their intended audience. Children write more quickly in cursive and their writing is legible. They maintain a clear focus on relevant content whilst writing more extensively, using a range of accurate tenses and punctuation.

**Book Band:** Lime, brown, grey, dark blue, dark red

### Literacy Age-related Learning Opportunities for C5

### Relevant Learning Descriptors

Children should have the opportunity:

- To practise reading aloud, reciting, presenting and performing
- To be exposed to challenging and ambitious vocabulary: exploring unfamiliar words in a range of contexts and investigating etymology and morphology
- To write at length across the curriculum, with scaffolding and prompting that supports them to plan, structure and edit their work
- To learn to use a wide range of punctuation accurately and practise using it in their writing
- To explore the accurate use of a range of verb forms and prepositions
- To read a wide range of texts for pleasure: different text-types and genres, literature from their own and other literary heritages
- To have time to read, both self-selected and directed material, in school and at home, independently and with others, and to discuss what they have read
- To share their own and others' recommendations for reading material
- To read for a range of purposes across the curriculum, developing their understanding of what they read using a variety of strategies and resources, practising extracting key information, summarising and discussing what they have read, and justifying their views and opinions
- To learn some technical language for literary analysis, including literary terms and devices.

#### Competent Literacy

Children can read aloud, recite longer pieces and perform a speaking part in a play to the school community fluently, with understanding, with attention to punctuation and with expression. They present their work from across the curriculum to their peers, maintaining a focus on the topic, summarising main ideas and giving key details. When listening to presentations, they can note down key information or important details. Children write fluently and legibly in cursive script. Their spelling is generally accurate and they use a dictionary or thesaurus when needed. Children use a greater range of punctuation and text structuring accurately and to support meaning. They plan, structure, edit and proof-read their writing, adapting for the audience, drawing on their reading experience and using organisational and presentational devices. Children approach diverse texts with confidence, selecting from a wide range of fiction, poetry, plays, non-fiction, reference and textbooks. They read independently and silently and the speed of their reading increases beyond that of speech. Children discuss, in an increasingly mature way and using some of the language of literary analysis, their understanding of what they read, asking questions, making inferences and connections, and identifying how the author uses language, structure and presentation to convey meaning and influence the reader.

**Book band:** Grey, dark blue, dark red, black, black+

### Literacy Age-related Learning Opportunities for C6

### Relevant Learning Descriptors

<p>Children should have the opportunity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● To practise presenting, reciting and performing to their class</li> <li>● To practice listening to information presented both by the teacher and by their peers, taking notes, asking questions and discussing ideas and opinions</li> <li>● To take part in drama rehearsal, production and performance on a small scale</li> <li>● To experience a rich and ambitious vocabulary: exploring new words in a range of contexts and investigating etymology and morphology</li> <li>● To practice reading and writing across the curriculum at length and in depth, for different purposes and in different structures and genres</li> <li>● To practice different reading styles for different purposes: e.g. skimming and scanning, editing and proofreading</li> <li>● To deepen their understanding of grammar and the function of words and phrases in sentences</li> <li>● To read a wide range of texts for pleasure: different text-types and genres, literature from their own and other literary heritages</li> <li>● To have time to read, both self-selected and directed material, in school and at home, independently and with others, and to discuss what they have read</li> <li>● To explore the analysis of text using a range of technical grammatical language, and some literary terms.</li> <li>● To build understanding and make meaning through inference, giving a rationale providing evidence for their conclusions.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Secure Literacy</b></p> <p>Children can give a presentation of their independent work to the class on a familiar topic, using notes and answering questions. They can take both brief and detailed notes on what they hear and read, summarising by identifying main ideas, and giving supporting details and examples. Children take an active role in drama exercises, beginning to practise self-expression. Children are confident writers who enjoy writing in different genres. They begin to develop the complexity of their writing through setting a mood and tone, varying sentence length and structure and using more sophisticated transitional phrases. Children’s writing is securely structured, organised and punctuated, with attention paid to the purpose, audience and genre. They are familiar with several formal text structures, such as business letters and writing up a science experiment. Editing and proof-reading is becoming more independent, with children making some revisions autonomously and identifying and correcting many spelling, punctuation and grammar errors. Children are avid readers who make choices from a wide range of material, reading confidently, independently and with ease. They cross check different cues, and use their prior knowledge and understanding of phonics to decode unknown words without impeding fluency and ensuring good comprehension. Children are developing strong reading preferences, and showing interest in new authors and genres. They are able to make comparisons and connections within and across different texts. Children have a grasp of the basic language of literary analysis, and use it in their discussions and writing about what they have read.</p>
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### Literacy Age-related Learning Opportunities for C7

### Relevant Learning Descriptors

<p>Children should have the opportunity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● To practise presenting, reciting and performing to their class</li> <li>● To practice listening to information presented both by the teacher and by their peers, taking notes, asking questions and discussing ideas and opinions</li> <li>● To take part in the writing, rehearsal, production and performance of drama on a small scale</li> <li>● To experience a rich and ambitious vocabulary: exploring new words in a range of contexts and investigating etymology and morphology</li> <li>● To practice reading and writing across the curriculum at length, in depth and across multiple texts, for different purposes and in different structures and genres</li> <li>● To practice drafting, redrafting, editing, proofing and 'publishing' their work</li> <li>● To practice different reading styles for different purposes: e.g. skimming and scanning, editing and proofreading</li> <li>● To read a wide range of texts for pleasure: different text-types and genres, literature from their own and other literary heritages, and that ranges from historical to modern.</li> <li>● To have time to read, both self-selected and directed material, in school and at home, independently and with others, and to discuss and write about what they have read</li> <li>● To explore the detailed analysis of text using a range of technical language to describe literary and linguistic devices</li> </ul>	<p><b>Proficient Literacy</b></p> <p>Students can give a presentation on a prepared assigned topic, using notes and answering questions. They can record important information about what they have read or heard in a more organised and systematic fashion. Students perform dialogue, skits and short plays, including those that they have written themselves, often based on books or other material they have studied across the curriculum. They recite a wide range of poetry, including poems and poets of their own preference. Students can write at length, shaping and developing writing across a wide range of genres, choosing language and features that are appropriate for the purpose and audience of their writing, and developing their own style. They write on a wide range of topics, resourcing and utilising information and ideas from different external sources. Students' writing is grammatically correct, their punctuation is more sophisticated, they spell most words used in everyday language correctly, and they draw on their wider knowledge of language and spelling to work out more complex words. They can follow a process of drafting, re-drafting, editing and responding to their own writing. Students are self-motivated, confident and experienced readers, who pursue their own interests through their reading. They can tackle challenging texts across the curriculum, reading thoughtfully, using a wide range of comprehension strategies and making inferences from complex layers of meaning. Students use reference resources to assist independent study and research, including using multiple texts on a specific subject to locate, analyse and synthesise information. They use dictionaries, thesauruses and etymological dictionaries to support precise and accurate writing. Students have an understanding of the concept of meter in poetry, and are able to use some technical language to talk about the patterns they can hear. They</p>
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	have a wide range of technical vocabulary for both oral and written literary analysis, including literary terms and linguistic analysis.
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### Literacy Age-related Learning Opportunities for C8

### Relevant Learning Descriptors

<p>Children should have the opportunity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To practise presenting, reciting and performing to a wider audience, including their own work</li> <li>• To learn the language and structures of formal debate, and explore taking part</li> <li>• To experience a rich and ambitious vocabulary: exploring new words in a range of contexts and investigating etymology and morphology</li> <li>• To practice reading and writing across the curriculum at length, in depth, for different purposes and in different structures and genres</li> <li>• To practice drafting, redrafting, editing, proofing and 'publishing' their work for a real or imagined audience</li> <li>• To read a wide range of texts for interest and pleasure: different text-types and genres, literature from their own and other literary heritages, and that ranges from historical to modern.</li> <li>• To have time to read, both self-selected and directed material, in school and at home, independently and with others, and to discuss and write about what they have read</li> <li>• To explore formal and non-formal language structures, devices and vocabulary</li> <li>• To begin to read critically and reflectively, exploring a wide range of technical terms for literary analysis</li> </ul>	<p><b>Mature, Independent Literacy</b></p> <p>Students can present an independent research project to a wider audience, answering questions and responding to comments about their work. They perform in a full length play to an audience of friends, family and the wider public. Students take part in structured debates, presenting arguments that both tally and disagree with their own opinions. They are able to code-switch appropriately in both spoken and written language, using standard English consistently and competently in their writing and having a secure control of complex grammatical structures. Students are highly competent and developed writers who have a recognisable voice and use writing as a tool for thinking. They communicate clearly, effectively and imaginatively, selecting and adapting tone, style, register and structure for different forms, purposes and audiences. Students write with an audience in mind, manipulating and controlling their writing to achieve an intended effect on their reader. They use ambitious vocabulary for purpose and effect. Students are enthusiastic and reflective readers, who can access a wide range of texts to pursue their interests. They can explain and discuss their understanding of what they have read and evaluate evidence from a variety of sources. Students can identify and give explicit explanation for the effect of text on the reader, analysing the impact of authorial techniques and devices with accurate technical vocabulary. They are</p>
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- To compare and contrast reading and information from a variety of sources, discussing orally and in writing their preferences, views and opinions.

able to question and admire aspects of content, form and function, comparing ideas and perspectives and how these are conveyed.

1. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/284286/reading\\_for\\_pleasure.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/284286/reading_for_pleasure.pdf)