



Early Childhood Curriculum

Curriculum Intent statement

The Early Childhood curriculum at St Paul's Waldorf School provides a warm, secure and developmentally appropriate foundation for children aged three to six. Rooted in Steiner Waldorf pedagogy and aligned with statutory requirements, the curriculum nurtures the whole child through meaningful activity, imaginative play, rich oral language, practical life experiences and a strong daily and seasonal rhythm. Our intent is to support children's physical, social, emotional, cognitive and creative development in a way that honours childhood, builds confidence and fosters curiosity. By the end of their kindergarten journey, children are well-prepared—socially, emotionally and developmentally—for the transition into Class One and the next stage of their education.

Mixed age group

At St Paul's Waldorf School children join their mixed age group kindergarten from three years of age, and stay for three years, until the end of the academic year that they turn six years old. The curriculum encompasses the statutory Early Years Foundation Stage (with some exemptions and modifications granted by the DfE for all Steiner Waldorf settings) for children age 3 to 5 years. The kindergarten curriculum is expanded for the oldest children (age 5-6) through extended activities and expectations: this expanded curriculum meets the Independent School standards.

The mixed age group of three to six-year-olds (K3, K4, K5) provides a unique space where older children (K5) are expected to and can 'step-up' in all areas of kindergarten life. They can use their initiative, extend and individualise activities, are given and take responsibility, lead and develop independence. This creates the opportunity for the younger children (K3, K4) to benefit from the example set by the older children's curriculum and development. Occasionally a child joins kindergarten after their third birthday but before they are in the K3 year group; these children are referred to as K2, Twinkle stars. The main three age groups are detailed below.

Year groups	Year group – kindergarten name	Year group in mainstream education
K3	Star	Nursery
K4	Moon	Reception
K5	Sun	Year one

Kindergarten curriculum comparison - mapping EYFS and Independent School Standards:

Waldorf Kindergarten curriculum	EYFS (K3, K4)	Independent School Standards/statutory requirements (K5)
CLL: Communication, language and literacy	Communication and language, literacy	Linguistic education
PSER: Personal, social, emotional and relationships	Personal, social and emotional development	Personal, social and health education (PSHE), RSE, Spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC)
PD: Physical development	Physical development	Physical education
HW: Health and well being	Physical development, Personal social and emotional development	PSHE, Physical education
M: Mathematics	Mathematics	Mathematical education
ST: Science and technology	Understanding the world	Scientific education
HS: Human and societal	Understanding the world	Human and social education
CA: Creative and aesthetic	Expressive arts and design	Creative and aesthetic education
CEL: Characteristics of effective learning	Characteristics of effective learning	

How children learn in the kindergarten years

'In the first seven years, the young child learns to be at home in the physical body, developing an orientation in space and acquiring the initial, fundamental developmental capacities of uprightness, speech and thought. The content of the child's whole environment is the learning context; the child 'imitates' the people and the agencies that are in his/her environment. This imitating gesture serves to imprint on the child's will the content and the quality of what is learnt. In the kindergarten, experiential learning, discovery through creative play and intensive social interaction with peers and teachers constitute the main education themes. Awareness of the complexities of language and number is acquired through informal play, activities and social interaction. These are not

taught didactically. In the seventh year, the child's forces finish forming the physical body and become active in developing the facility for independent, representational, pictorial thinking. Class 1 is the first introduction to a formal schooling process.'

(from Chapter 6, The Tasks and Content of the Steiner-Waldorf Curriculum by Rawson, Richter and Avison)

Inclusion and SEND

St Paul's Waldorf School is committed to providing an inclusive Early Childhood environment where every child feels valued, supported and able to participate fully in kindergarten life. Practitioners observe children closely to identify emerging needs and adapt the environment, routines and expectations to ensure equitable access to learning. The SENDCo works closely with teachers to develop appropriate strategies, offer guidance and liaise with external professionals when needed. Children with additional needs are supported through warm relationships, consistent routines, sensory-rich experiences and opportunities for success within the mixed-age group. Kindergartens work with the adaptive classroom model and are currently developing adaptive teaching. This approach ensures that all children, including those with SEND or EAL, experience a curriculum that is developmentally appropriate, inclusive and aligned with the EYFS and Independent School Standards.

Kindergarten Curriculum – including curriculum expansion for K5:

CLL:	Communication, language and literacy
(K2) K3 K4 K5	<p>Children develop strong foundations in communication, language and literacy through a rich oral tradition of stories, songs and verses learned by heart during daily ring times and story sessions. These experiences nurture attentive listening, support memory, and build a broad and expressive vocabulary. Practitioners engage in warm, responsive back-and-forth interactions throughout play and daily routines, modelling language, extending children's ideas and encouraging them to express their thoughts with increasing clarity and confidence.</p> <p>Children are given time, space and resources to create their own stories, puppet shows and imaginative play sequences. These experiences strengthen narrative skills, sequencing, expressive language and confidence in speaking within a group. Home languages are valued and celebrated through songs and verse, and puppetry and books provide additional scaffolding for children with EAL to access stories, develop understanding and build vocabulary.</p> <p>Early literacy is embedded in meaningful, developmentally appropriate experiences. Drawing and mark-making materials are available daily, enabling children to communicate ideas visually and symbolically. Practitioners support children to develop a comfortable pencil grip to make purposeful marks and</p>

	forms. Over time, drawings become more figurative and emergent writing begins to appear as children represent their own stories, experiences and imaginative ideas.
K5	<p>Older children help the teacher retell a story by taking part in puppet shows during whole-class story time, strengthening memory, confidence and expressive language. Practitioners participate purposefully, modelling rich vocabulary, guiding turn-taking and supporting children to shape their narratives. Children are given special drawing books in which they recall kindergarten stories through their drawings, with adults sensitively encouraging detail, sequencing and oral description.</p> <p>Children learn to recognise their own name and those of others by observing name labels, and often choose to practise writing when making birthday cards, creating signs for games or asking an adult to write words for them to copy. When they create puppet shows during play, they frequently accompany them with their own spoken narrative, drawing in other children to watch and listen. Adults remain nearby to extend language and support collaborative storytelling when needed.</p> <p>Older children begin to play with rhyme, alliteration and nonsense words, enjoying simple tongue twisters introduced by adults to enrich phonological awareness in a playful, developmentally appropriate way. Listening skills are strengthened through music stick games, where practitioners lead rhythmic patterns and children respond with focused attention. As children grow in confidence, their play becomes more elaborate, with increased use of language for discussion, negotiation and imaginative planning, supported by adults who scaffold communication and help children articulate their ideas clearly.</p>

PSER	Personal, social, emotional and relationships
(K2) K3 K4 K5	<p>Personal, Social and Emotional Development is embedded throughout daily life in the kindergarten. Through play, children practise sharing resources, negotiating roles, expressing their ideas and being open to the ideas of others. Mixed-age play and collaborative activities help children develop confidence, empathy and the ability to work harmoniously with peers.</p> <p>Group experiences such as ring time, shared meals and story time support children in learning how to be part of a community. They begin to understand that others have needs and feelings, and they learn to listen, take turns and contribute appropriately. Practitioners model respectful interactions and provide warm, consistent co-regulation, enabling children to develop emerging self-regulation skills.</p> <p>Children learn and apply simple golden rules, such as using gentle hands and kind words. Consent is introduced in a developmentally appropriate way, with adults supporting children to check in with one another during rough-and-tumble play or when offering hugs. Through guided conflict resolution, children learn to express their feelings, listen to others and understand that their actions have consequences.</p>

	<p>Independence is nurtured through daily routines, including self-care, toileting and managing personal belongings. Children learn how to keep themselves safe, supported by the NSPCC PANTS model and ongoing conversations about personal boundaries and wellbeing.</p> <p>Respect, inclusion and a sense of belonging are cultivated intentionally. Children encounter stories, songs, festivals and resources that reflect a wide range of cultures, religions and family structures. Books and birthday puppet shows celebrate different family types, reinforcing the kindergarten's guiding principle that everyone is welcome.</p>
K5	<p>Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) are woven throughout daily life in the kindergarten. Older children play an important role in supporting younger peers as they settle into the group, modelling kindness, patience and responsibility. They help with practical tasks such as putting on waterproofs, fastening zips and tying apron bows, demonstrating care for others and contributing positively to the life of the class. These experiences promote self-esteem, empathy and a sense of belonging, in line with the school's commitment to pupils' personal development.</p> <p>Secure, long-term relationships with teachers provide emotional safety and continuity, supporting children through the significant developmental changes that occur in their third kindergarten year. Practitioners offer warm, consistent guidance, helping children understand their feelings and develop emerging self-regulation. Older children are given appropriate challenges, such as leading a short part of ring time or demonstrating a finger game, which builds confidence, independence and a sense of achievement.</p> <p>Children are supported to develop stamina, focus and persistence, learning to complete tasks they have begun and to take pride in their efforts. Through imaginative play, they practise essential interpersonal skills including negotiation, planning, conflict resolution and listening to the ideas of others. Adults model respectful communication and guide children in resolving disagreements fairly, helping them understand that their actions have consequences for themselves and others.</p> <p>Relationships education is delivered in a developmentally appropriate way. Children learn about kindness, cooperation, personal boundaries and consent, supported by adults who help them navigate social situations such as rough-and-tumble play or offering hugs. These practices promote safe, respectful relationships and align with safeguarding expectations. The mixed-age environment fosters a culture of mutual respect, where older children act as positive role models and younger children feel supported and included.</p> <p>This approach ensures that PSHE and RSE are meaningful, relational and fully integrated into the children's daily experiences, meeting the Independent School Standards, within the Steiner Waldorf ethos, and preparing pupils for the next stage of their education.</p>

PD	Physical development
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<p>(K2) K3 K4 K5</p>	<p>Physical Development is supported throughout the kindergarten day through a balance of child-initiated movement and purposeful adult-led activity. During free play, children move freely and confidently, selecting resources that enable them to climb, build, carry, dig, balance and construct imaginative play. These experiences strengthen gross motor skills, coordination, spatial awareness and core stability.</p> <p>Teacher-led ring times, ring games and beanbag activities provide structured opportunities to develop balance, rhythm, midline crossing, proprioception and whole-body coordination. Practitioners model movements, offer gentle guidance and ensure that all children can participate successfully, supporting progression in physical confidence and control.</p> <p>Fine motor development is embedded in meaningful, practical experiences. Children chop fruit and vegetables, knead dough, draw, paint, sew, work with wood, model with wax and engage in seasonal crafts. These activities build hand strength, dexterity and precision, preparing children for later writing and tool use. Outdoor learning is valued as highly as indoor learning. Children spend extended periods outside each day, where they run, climb, dig, balance and explore natural materials. Weekly walks develop stamina, coordination and awareness of the environment, while visits to the local park offer additional opportunities for climbing, swinging and sliding on larger equipment. These experiences promote physical confidence, resilience and a lifelong enjoyment of movement.</p> <p>This approach ensures that children develop the strength, coordination, control and confidence needed for the next stage of their learning, fully meeting the expectations of the EYFS Physical Development educational programme.</p>
<p>K5</p>	<p>Physical development for this age group is supported through a rich balance of practical activity, purposeful movement and increasing responsibility appropriate to the children's final year. Older children engage in special craft projects designed to extend fine motor skills, concentration and, will development and perseverance. They learn to thread needles, tie knots, weave and fingerknit, developing dexterity, hand strength and precision. These more formalised activities deepen their experiences and strengthen their capacity to focus, complete tasks and take pride in their work.</p> <p>As the oldest members of the group, children take on additional responsibilities that support both physical competence and social development. They help prepare for mealtimes by setting the table and pouring drinks for the whole class, demonstrating coordination, control and growing independence. These tasks also reinforce their reliability and readiness for the next stage of education.</p> <p>Gross motor development is extended through more elaborate skipping games, which challenge balance, rhythm, coordination and stamina. In the summer term, children participate in Eurythmy, where they refine spatial awareness, proprioception and controlled movement through guided, expressive physical activity. During ring time, older children imitate increasingly complex movement sequences, supporting progression in whole-body coordination and physical confidence.</p>

	<p>This approach ensures that children in their final kindergarten year experience a well-planned, age-appropriate and progressive physical development curriculum. It meets the Independent School Standards, within the Steiner Waldorf ethos, by promoting fine and gross motor competence, purposeful challenge, independence, and readiness for the next stage of learning within a safe, nurturing environment.</p>
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HW	Health and well being
<p>(K2) K3 K4 K5</p>	<p>Children’s health and wellbeing are central to life in the kindergarten. A strong daily and weekly rhythm provides security, predictability and a sense of belonging, enabling children to feel safe, settled and ready to learn. Warm, consistent relationships with teachers—often built over three years—offer continuity of care and secure attachments, supporting children’s emotional wellbeing and confidence.</p> <p>Independence in self-care is nurtured through everyday routines, helping children develop autonomy, self-esteem and pride in their growing capabilities. Children also learn to help others, contributing to the life of the group and experiencing the value of cooperation and kindness. Healthy eating is embedded in daily practice: children enjoy nutritious meals and drinks such as water, milk and herbal tea, and they take part in preparing fruit plates, baking bread, making butter and helping with birthday cakes. These shared tasks promote healthy habits, fine motor skills and a positive relationship with food.</p> <p>Teachers understand behaviour as a form of communication and respond with sensitivity, helping children express their feelings, resolve conflicts and develop resilience. Through play and teacher-led games, children practise turn-taking, waiting, negotiating and managing impulses, building the foundations for self-regulation. Outdoor play in all weathers and a weekly walk strengthen physical resilience, stamina and wellbeing, while fostering a connection with the natural world.</p> <p>Children learn to care for their environment through regular cleaning activities, developing responsibility and respect for shared spaces. Managed risk is an intentional part of the curriculum: children use real tools and engage in challenging play with close adult supervision, learning to judge risk, understand their limits and keep themselves and others safe.</p> <p>This approach ensures that children experience a holistic, developmentally appropriate and nurturing Health & Wellbeing curriculum that is aligned with the Steiner Waldorf ethos, fully meets the expectations of the EYFS and supports their readiness for the next stage of learning.</p>
<p>K5</p>	<p>Health and wellbeing are central to the kindergarten experience, and older children in their third year develop a deepened sense of belonging within the familiar rhythms of the day and week. Their growing awareness of these rhythms supports emotional security and confidence, enabling them to contribute</p>

	<p>meaningfully to the life of the group—for example, by answering younger children’s questions about the day’s activities or meals. This sense of orientation and predictability strengthens their wellbeing and readiness for the next stage of education.</p> <p>As the oldest members of the kindergarten, children take on increased responsibility for caring for their environment. They wash and dry dishes, clean tables and floors, and help tend the garden. These tasks foster independence, self-care, cooperation and pride in contributing to the community. Using more complex tools, setting up the painting table or leading a finger game provides appropriate challenge and nurtures their sense of capability, supporting both physical and emotional development.</p> <p>Older children begin to articulate their understanding of healthy choices, including the importance of nutritious food and regular exercise. This emerging awareness reflects their developmental stage and supports the formation of lifelong healthy habits. The curriculum is intentionally designed to support the significant developmental shift that occurs at this age, offering stability, guidance and opportunities for mastery within a familiar environment.</p> <p>Transition groups provide additional support as children prepare for Class One. These sessions help them navigate the emotional and social aspects of moving on, ensuring they feel secure, confident and well-prepared for the next stage of their education.</p> <p>This approach ensures that children experience a nurturing, developmentally appropriate and progressive Health & Wellbeing curriculum that fully meets the Independent School Standards and is matched with the Steiner Waldorf ethos. It promotes emotional security, independence, responsibility, healthy choices and readiness for future learning.</p>
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M	Mathematics
(K2) K3 K4 K5	<p>Mathematical learning is embedded throughout the kindergarten day through meaningful, practical experiences that allow children to develop a deep, intuitive understanding of number, pattern, shape and measure. Children measure and weigh ingredients during baking, using and internalising mathematical language such as <i>heavy</i>, <i>light</i>, <i>more</i> and <i>less</i>. These activities support early comparison, estimation and problem-solving skills.</p> <p>Counting is woven naturally into daily routines. Ensuring the correct number of bread rolls are made provides regular opportunities for counting, one-to-one correspondence and early subitising. Finger games and movement rhymes reinforce counting forwards and backwards and introduce the concept of zero in a playful, memorable way.</p> <p>Children explore pattern and sequencing through preparing fruit plates, arranging natural materials and engaging in seasonal crafts. These experiences support early algebraic thinking and help children recognise, create and extend patterns. Crafts</p>

	<p>also offer opportunities for measurement, direction, positional language and spatial reasoning.</p> <p>Large-scale construction play, both indoors and outdoors, enables children to experience height, weight, balance and gravity first-hand. Through building, testing and adjusting their structures, they develop an embodied understanding of physical properties and early problem-solving strategies. Tidy-up time provides daily practice in sorting, categorising and recognising shape and space, such as folding cloths or returning blocks to their baskets.</p> <p>Children encounter shapes in meaningful contexts, such as forming a circle during ring time or folding paper into triangles to create aeroplanes or snowflakes. These experiences support recognition of 2D shapes and the development of spatial awareness.</p> <p>This approach ensures that mathematical learning is purposeful, developmentally appropriate and fully aligned with the EYFS Mathematics educational programme and the Steiner Waldorf ethos. Children build strong foundations in number, pattern, shape, space and measures through rich, hands-on experiences that prepare them confidently for the next stage of their learning.</p>
K5	<p>Mathematical learning for older children in their final kindergarten year is embedded in meaningful, practical activity that supports the development of number sense, pattern, shape, space and early calculation. As part of their increased responsibility within the group, children prepare the table for snack by matching and sequencing items, counting chairs, bowls and cups, and adjusting quantities by adding or taking away as needed. These tasks strengthen one-to-one correspondence, early arithmetic and mathematical reasoning.</p> <p>More intricate craft activities deepen children’s understanding of space, shape, measure and pattern. They explore symmetry when ensuring both hands of a doll are the same size or when sewing features evenly on a hobby horse. Drawings increasingly incorporate repeating patterns and structured designs, reflecting children’s growing ability to recognise, create and extend patterns.</p> <p>Physical movement also supports mathematical development. As children refine their skipping skills, they count their skips—often reaching thirty or more, and sometimes well over one hundred—building fluency, stamina and confidence with larger numbers. Birthdays provide further opportunities for number recognition and counting, as older children count out the correct number of candles or select the matching numeral for the birthday ring.</p> <p>During play, children create more complex shapes and structures, using space imaginatively and purposefully. They often introduce symbolic mathematical ideas into their play, such as creating “money” or tickets for puppet shows, demonstrating early understanding of number as a tool for representing real-world concepts.</p> <p>This approach ensures that mathematical learning is purposeful, developmentally appropriate and progressive. It fully meets the Independent School Standards, within the Steiner Waldorf ethos by promoting number fluency, spatial reasoning, pattern awareness and early problem-solving, while preparing children confidently for the next stage of their education.</p>

ST	Science and technology
(K2) K3 K4 K5	<p>Understanding the World is nurtured through rich, hands-on experiences that help children make sense of the natural environment, materials, processes and the cultural life of the kindergarten. The seasonal curriculum provides a living connection to the rhythms of the year. Through songs, stories, crafts and the nature table, children experience changes in weather, light, plants and festivals, developing a sense of belonging within the natural world.</p> <p>Practical life activities offer repeated opportunities to observe real processes. Children bake bread and cakes, churn butter, and grind wheat into flour using warm, hand-powered technologies such as butter churns, wheat mills, whisks, peelers and knives. The repetition of these tasks allows children to notice cause and effect, develop theories about how things work and build early scientific understanding. Teachers support this by modelling curiosity through phrases such as “I wonder...”, giving children space to think, observe and form their own ideas. Children explore natural materials and physical phenomena in the garden, experimenting with water, mud and the changing properties of materials. Gardening deepens their understanding of the life cycle of plants as they sow seeds, tend beds and observe vegetables, herbs and flowers growing over time. Seasonal festivals introduce specific tools and processes, such as using an apple press at Michaelmas to make juice, helping children appreciate the effort and stages involved in producing familiar foods.</p> <p>Craft activities provide insight into multi-stage processes, such as transforming raw fleece into felted items through carding and wet-felting. These experiences help children understand sequence, transformation and the relationship between natural materials and finished products. Tidy-up time reinforces the idea that everything has its place, supporting children’s understanding of order, categorisation and the human role in caring for the environment.</p> <p>This approach ensures that children develop a deep, experiential understanding of the world around them. It fully meets the expectations of the EYFS, within the Steiner Waldorf ethos, by fostering curiosity, observation, enquiry, cultural awareness and a meaningful connection to the natural world, preparing children confidently for the next stage of their learning.</p>
K5	<p>Science and technology learning for older children in their final kindergarten year is grounded in real processes, hands-on exploration and opportunities to observe how the world works. The seasonal curriculum provides a living context for scientific enquiry, as children experience changes in weather, light and plant life through daily outdoor play, gardening and nature-based activities. These experiences help them notice patterns, observe change over time and develop early theories about natural phenomena.</p> <p>Children engage in repeated practical processes such as baking bread, churning butter and grinding wheat into flour. Through these multi-stage activities, they explore cause and effect, material changes and the transformation of raw ingredients into finished products. Warm, hand-powered technologies —</p>

	<p>including butter churns, wheat mills, whisks, peelers and knives — allow children to investigate simple mechanisms and understand how tools support human activity.</p> <p>Teachers support enquiry by modelling curiosity and allowing children time to observe without interruption. Phrases such as “I wonder...” encourage children to develop their own ideas, test their thinking and build confidence in asking questions. Tidy-up routines reinforce an understanding of order, categorisation and the human role in caring for the environment.</p> <p>This approach ensures that children develop a strong foundation in scientific thinking and technological understanding. It fully meets the Independent School Standards, within the Steiner Waldorf ethos, by promoting observation, enquiry, understanding of mechanisms, safe tool use, awareness of natural processes and readiness for the next stage of learning.</p>
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HS	Human and societal
(K2) K3 K4 K5	<p>Understanding the world is developed through rich, meaningful experiences that help children make sense of their community, their relationships and the wider world. A strong sense of belonging is fostered through stories, puppet shows, books and festivals that reflect the diversity of families, homes, races, religions and cultures. Children encounter different environments and events from the past through storytelling, supporting their awareness of time, change and continuity. Cultural identity is celebrated daily. Ring time may include songs and games from children’s own cultures, and home languages are woven into the life of the kindergarten through counting, verses and shared contributions. Dressing-up fabrics from various cultures allow children to explore human roles and traditions through imaginative play. Festivals deepen children’s understanding of community life, with some celebrated alongside other kindergartens, families and the wider school. Parents are invited to co-create festivals from their own heritage, strengthening cultural connection and mutual respect.</p> <p>Daily routines support children’s social understanding and personal development. Shared mealtimes teach skills such as sitting at the table, using cutlery, practising good manners and engaging in conversation. Eating foods from a variety of cultures helps children appreciate that families may eat different foods and follow different traditions. Gardening offers first-hand experience of where food comes from and the natural processes involved in growing plants.</p> <p>Children learn to be part of a group through storytime, where they practise listening, turn-taking and allowing others to enjoy the story. Kindergarten rules such as “kind words”, “gentle hands” and “everyone is welcome” guide children in caring for one another and building positive relationships. Play provides a safe space for children to explore and process life experiences, such as visiting the doctor, welcoming a new baby, going to a restaurant or travelling on a train. Weekly walks strengthen children’s connection to the seasons and the natural world, while also developing road awareness and familiarity with the local</p>

	<p>community. Encounters with people at work along the way help children understand different roles within society.</p> <p>This approach fully meets the EYFS expectations for Understanding the World by nurturing cultural awareness, community connection, early historical understanding, and a sense of place. It also strongly supports Personal Social and Emotional Development through shared routines, inclusive practice, emotional security and opportunities to build relationships, preparing children confidently for the next stage of their learning.</p>
K5	<p>Human and societal understanding is developed through meaningful participation in the life of the kindergarten community. Older children take on increasing responsibility, such as managing puppet shows by arranging chairs, creating tickets and guiding the audience. These experiences help them understand social roles, organisation and cooperation within a group.</p> <p>Daily mealtime routines deepen children’s awareness of community life. When setting the table, they ensure there is enough for everyone and practise sharing food and drink fairly. These tasks foster responsibility, empathy and an understanding of collective wellbeing. Older children naturally support younger peers, modelling the kindergarten’s golden rules and helping them navigate social situations with kindness and confidence.</p> <p>Children learn to care for shared materials and their environment. During wet-on-wet watercolour painting, they develop the ability to clean their brushes between colours and maintain the quality of their paint, demonstrating respect for tools and communal resources. Through regular opportunities for free drawing, children express their understanding of the human world by representing people, homes, vehicles, trees, flowers, the sun, moon, stars and weather.</p> <p>The daily, weekly and seasonal rhythms of kindergarten life provide a secure structure that helps children develop a sense of themselves in time and place. These repeated experiences support their understanding of continuity, change and belonging within a wider community.</p> <p>This approach fully meets the Independent School Standards, within the Steiner Waldorf ethos, by promoting social responsibility, cooperation, cultural awareness and an emerging understanding of human roles and societal functioning. It prepares children confidently for the next stage of their learning and participation in the wider world.</p>

CA	Creative and aesthetic
(K2) K3 K4 K5	<p>Expressive Arts and Design is nurtured through daily opportunities for children to explore materials, movement, music and imaginative play. Creativity flows naturally through free play, both indoors and outdoors, where open-ended resources invite children to construct, invent and express their ideas. Drawing</p>

	<p>materials are always available indoors, while outdoors children make marks with sticks, mud and chalk, developing confidence in representing their thoughts and experiences.</p> <p>Weekly wet-on-wet watercolour painting immerses children in the sensory experience of colour. They explore the qualities of the primary colours and discover how they blend to form secondary colours, building early artistic understanding through process and experimentation. Seasonal crafts offer further opportunities to create beautiful objects inspired by nature, with children choosing fabrics and materials that reflect their own preferences and aesthetic choices.</p> <p>Children observe the teacher creating nature tables that change with the seasons, developing an appreciation for beauty, composition and the expressive potential of natural materials. Movement and music are woven into daily life. Ring time includes songs, gestures and simple dances that inspire children to create their own movements during play. Musical instruments are available throughout the day, and children often invent their own using pots, pans and other resources, exploring rhythm, sound and expressive possibilities.</p> <p>This approach fully meets the EYFS expectations for Expressive Arts and Design, within the Steiner Waldorf ethos, by providing rich opportunities for exploration, imagination, artistic expression and creative decision-making. Children develop confidence in using materials, expressing ideas and engaging in imaginative experiences, preparing them for the next stage of their creative learning.</p>
K5	<p>Creative and aesthetic development is nurtured through daily opportunities for children to express themselves artistically, imaginatively and through meaningful engagement with materials. Older children use special drawing books to recall and illustrate scenes from the stories told at storytime, strengthening memory, narrative understanding and representational drawing skills. Alongside this, children freely create their own items using paper, including three-dimensional forms such as aeroplanes, boats and folded paper designs, demonstrating growing dexterity, spatial awareness and creative problem-solving.</p> <p>Weekly wet-on-wet watercolour painting offers a rich sensory experience in which children explore the qualities of the three primary colours and learn how to keep their colours clean while creating harmonious paintings. Weaving projects allow children to choose their favourite colours and, for some, to create simple patterns, showing emerging aesthetic judgement and design awareness.</p> <p>Children express their imagination through storytelling, song-making and puppet shows, often inventing their own narratives or creatively adapting familiar verses and rhymes. They contribute to festival preparations by helping to decorate the room beautifully, developing an appreciation for colour, form and seasonal aesthetics. Outdoors, children may create land art using natural materials such as leaves, seeds and conkers, deepening their connection to nature and their understanding of composition.</p> <p>Children express their imagination through storytelling, song-making and puppet shows, often inventing their own narratives or creatively adapting familiar verses and rhymes. They contribute to festival preparations by helping to decorate the room beautifully, developing an appreciation for colour, form and seasonal</p>

	<p>aesthetics. Outdoors, children create land art using natural materials such as leaves, seeds and conkers, deepening their connection to nature and their understanding of composition.</p> <p>This approach fully meets the Independent School Standards, within the Steiner Waldorf approach, by providing rich opportunities for artistic exploration, imaginative expression, aesthetic appreciation and creative collaboration. Children develop confidence in using materials, expressing ideas and contributing creatively to the life of the kindergarten, preparing them for the next stage of their artistic and imaginative development.</p>
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<p>Characteristics of Effective learning (EYFS)</p>	<p>Children develop the Characteristics of Effective Learning through a rich, rhythmic and deeply practical kindergarten experience that encourages curiosity, imagination, persistence and independence. The daily, weekly and seasonal rhythms provide a secure and predictable structure, enabling children to feel confident, grounded and ready to explore.</p>
<p>Playing and Exploring – Engagement</p>	<p>Children show high levels of engagement in free play, both indoors and outdoors, where open-ended resources invite them to investigate, imagine and create. They build increasingly complex structures, develop detailed imaginative play scenarios and lead younger children in shared games. Outdoors, they explore natural materials, make land art from leaves, seeds and conkers, and engage in mark-making with sticks, mud and chalk. Puppet shows, dressing-up fabrics from various cultures, and role-play based on real-life experiences such as visiting the doctor or travelling on a train deepen their imaginative engagement. Children freely create three-dimensional paper items such as aeroplanes and folded designs, demonstrating curiosity and a willingness to try new ideas.</p>
<p>Active Learning – Motivation</p>	<p>Children demonstrate sustained concentration and perseverance during activities such as wet-on-wet watercolour painting, weaving, seasonal crafts and drawing in their special story books. They return to familiar artistic processes with increasing skill and pride, learning to keep their colours clean, create patterns in weaving and refine their drawings to represent people, homes, vehicles, trees and weather. Older children take on meaningful responsibilities, such as setting the</p>

	<p>table, ensuring there is enough for everyone, supporting younger peers, organising puppet shows and helping prepare the room for festivals. These tasks foster motivation, confidence and a strong sense of capability. Children show enthusiasm in contributing to community celebrations, singing songs from different cultures, and participating in shared meals and ring games.</p>
<p>Creating and Thinking Critically – Thinking</p>	<p>Children think creatively and critically as they invent stories, songs and rhymes, adapt familiar verses, and design their own props or constructions. They make decisions about colour, pattern and materials in weaving and craft projects, and learn to care for tools and resources, such as cleaning brushes between colours during painting. Through recalling story scenes in their drawing books, they organise ideas, sequence events and represent their understanding of the world. Older children plan and manage aspects of group activities, such as arranging chairs for puppet shows, making tickets, guiding the audience and helping younger children understand the golden rules. Weekly walks support children’s awareness of the community, seasons and the roles of people they meet, helping them make connections and think about the world around them.</p>
<p>Summary</p>	<p>Across all areas of kindergarten life, children demonstrate curiosity, resilience, creativity and reflective thinking. The Characteristics of Effective Learning are embedded naturally through storytelling, artistic processes, imaginative play, community responsibilities, cultural celebrations and outdoor exploration. This holistic approach ensures that children become confident, self-motivated and thoughtful learners, well prepared for the next stage of their education.</p>

<p>Transition Curriculum for Sun Children (K5)</p>	<p>The transition curriculum for Sun Children (K5) provides a carefully structured, developmentally appropriate pathway from the holistic, play-based life of the kindergarten to the more formal learning environment of Class One. Rooted in Steiner Waldorf principles, the curriculum supports the child’s physical, social, emotional, imaginative and cognitive readiness, ensuring that each child approaches the next stage of schooling with confidence, capability and a strong sense of belonging.</p>
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<p>1. Practical Skills, Will Development and Craft</p>	<p>Sun Children engage in a rich programme of practical and artistic work that strengthens perseverance, fine motor skills, coordination and responsibility. Craft projects incorporate a wide range of tools and techniques, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • finger knitting and plaiting • weaving • carding fleece and making felt • cutting, sewing and simple construction • sawing, sanding and drilling • use of real tools such as carders, needles, scissors, saws, files, knives and hand drills <p>Children work at their own pace, often supporting one another, and spend extended periods working alongside teachers. These experiences cultivate focus, stamina and will-forces, forming a gentle inner bridge toward the more structured learning of Class One, which begins in the child’s seventh year.</p>
<p>2. Sunflower Group: Outdoor Challenge and Social Cohesion</p>	<p>Once a week, Sun Children spend a dedicated session with the outdoor teacher, engaging in age-appropriate physical challenges, gardening, craft and cooperative games. Early in the year, groups remain within their class cohort; as the year progresses, 5–6-year-old guests from other groups are invited to join. This supports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • social flexibility • confidence in mixed-age settings • strengthening relationships across the kindergarten <p>These sessions deepen resilience, physical capability and social maturity — key indicators of readiness for Class One.</p>
<p>3. Parent Partnership and Developmental Understanding</p>	<p>A Sun Parents’ Evening is held in the Autumn term to share insights into the development of the 5–6-year-old child and outline the curriculum designed to meet their needs. Parents are invited to experience activities such as finger knitting, skipping and beanbag games, helping them understand the developmental purpose behind the children’s work. Individual parent meetings are held twice in the sun year and parents receive a written end of year report. This partnership ensures alignment between home and school and supports a smooth transition.</p>

<p>4. Summer Term Transition Activities: Sunshine Group</p>	<p>In the Summer Term, older children stay for a full afternoon each week with their neighbouring kindergarten’s 5–6-year-olds. These sessions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • extended physical activities such as more challenging skipping games • age-appropriate, longer and more complex stories • Eurythmy sessions • meaningful craft projects such as making a doll or hobby horse <p>These activities strengthen listening stamina, perseverance, coordination and imaginative capacity — all essential foundations for the more formal rhythm of Class One.</p> <p>Toward the end of the year, Sun Children from all four groups join together for a walk to the local park for a “Sunshine Group Picnic,” joined by children who will enter Class One from other settings. This supports social cohesion and fosters a sense of community belonging.</p>
<p>5. Stories and end of kindergarten Ceremony</p>	<p>In the final term, stories and puppet shows are chosen to meet the inner mood and developmental needs of the older children. These narratives support emotional readiness, inner picturing and a sense of progression. The final day of the school year includes a special ceremony for Sun Children and their parents, acknowledging their journey through kindergarten and marking their transition into Class One with reverence and celebration.</p>
<p>6. Assessment, Monitoring and Professional Handover</p>	<p>Previous summative assessments inform planning for the child’s final kindergarten year. Throughout K5, teachers monitor each child’s development and progress, ensuring they are supported to fulfil their potential. K5 reports provide the Class One teacher with a comprehensive picture of each child’s strengths, needs and developmental profile.</p> <p>During the Summer Term, rising Class One children are verbally presented to the College of Teachers as part of the formal handover process. Detailed information is shared with the Class One teacher and SENDCo to ensure continuity of support.</p>
	<p>Before the first day of school, children and families are invited to visit the Class One classroom and meet their new teacher</p>

7. Orientation and Welcome into Class One	and teaching assistant, helping them feel secure and familiar with their new environment. Early in the Autumn Term, the new Class One is welcomed into a school assembly, marking their entry into the wider school community.
Summary	<p>The transition curriculum for Sun Children (K5) supports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • social maturity • emotional readiness • physical capability • imaginative strength • practical competence • cognitive foundations • a strong sense of belonging <p>This comprehensive approach ensures that children enter Class One with confidence, curiosity and the inner readiness required for the next stage of their educational journey.</p>

Evaluating Curriculum Effectiveness

The effectiveness of the Early Childhood curriculum is reviewed regularly through observation, reflection, analysis of assessment data and professional dialogue. Kindergarten teachers meet frequently to discuss children’s development, share insights and refine practice. Feedback from parents, children, the Class One teacher and the SENDCo contributes to ongoing curriculum development and ensures continuity across the kindergartens. Regular reviews of the curriculum, including the K5 transition programme, allow the team to evaluate how well the provision meets children’s needs, and aligns with both Steiner Waldorf principles and statutory expectations. This reflective cycle ensures that the curriculum remains responsive, intentional and continually improving.

	Related policies and documents
St Paul’s Waldorf School St Paul’s Waldorf School St Paul’s Waldorf School Waldorf UK Waldorf UK Waldorf UK Waldorf UK	Curriculum policy Early childhood assessment and planning policy SEND and Inclusion policy Curriculum activities in a Steiner Waldorf setting Steiner Waldorf embedded curriculum 5-7year olds EYFS Exemptions and modifications Developmental Descriptors

Policy holder	Date	Date of review
Delegated to: Early Childhood Manager Sarah Newby	February 2026	February 2027

Appendix

Glossary

Wet-on-wet painting – A process-based painting technique using watercolour on wet paper, supporting sensory experience, colour exploration and calm, focused work.

Eurythmy – A movement art unique to Steiner education that develops spatial awareness, coordination, rhythm and expressive movement.

Will-forces – A Steiner Waldorf term referring to the child’s developing capacity for initiative, perseverance, purposeful action, focus and follow-through, strengthened through practical activity.

Nature table – A seasonal display of natural objects that helps children connect with the rhythms of the year and observe changes in the natural world.

Ring time – A daily group activity involving songs, verses and movement games that support language, rhythm, coordination and social cohesion.

EYFS – Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework.

ISS – Independent School Standards.