

What to expect in the Lower School



“Our highest aim must be to develop young people who are able of themselves to impart purpose and direction to their lives”

Rudolf Steiner

What to expect in the Lower School...

This booklet will provide you with a short introduction to life in the Lower School from Class 1 to Class 5 (children aged 6-11). Children start their school journey through creative, imaginative learning using head, heart & hands to explore all subjects including engaging with colourful plays and festivals, exploring the environment and simple independent projects.

Whether you are visiting us for an Open Day, have a child in Kindergarten or are looking for an alternative schooling, this booklet aims to answer a few of your questions and give you a picture of the Lower School at Michael Hall.

We are happy to answer any further questions you may have, and look forward to welcoming you in the Lower School!

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An Overview of Each Year Group and The Child's Development

The Class 1 Child: Ready to learn

The children meet their Class Teacher, whose task it is to create a warm and secure learning environment for these tender young human beings. Teeth are wobbling and “gappy” smiles appearing. The children are introduced to the letters of the alphabet through stories and pictures: They learn to write and begin early stages of reading.

In number work children discover the qualities of the numbers and are introduced to Roman and Arabic numerals.

Through imaginative stories, pupils are introduced to the secrets of the four mathematical processes: addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. The narrative content meets this stage of development through the ancient wisdom of the fairy tale.



Sample timetable Class 1

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Lesson 1 08:15-09:05	Main Lesson	Main Lesson	Main Lesson	Main Lesson	Main Lesson
Lesson 2 09:10-10:10	Main Lesson	Main Lesson	Main Lesson	Main Lesson	Main Lesson
Break 10:10-10:35					
Lesson 3 10:40-11:30	Spanish	German	German	Outdoor Education	Spanish
Lesson 4 11:35-12:25	Wellbeing	Handwork		Outdoor Education	Numeracy
Lunch 12:30-13:20		School Finishes	School Finishes. This becomes a long day in the Summer term	School Finishes	School Finishes
Lesson 5 13:25-14:15	Eurythmy		Outdoor Education		
Lesson 6 14:20-15:10	Literacy		Outdoor Education		



Examples of Class 1 work from the Midsummer Exhibitions 2021

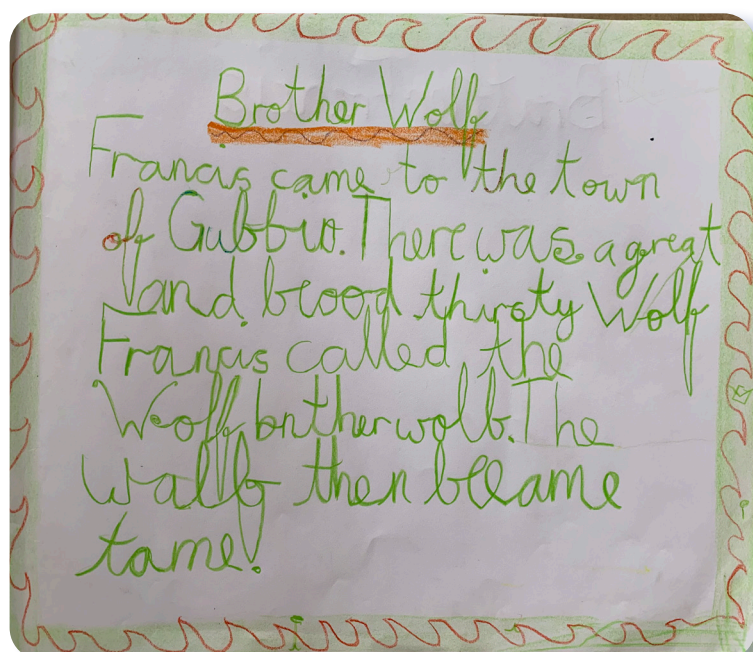


The Class 2 Child: Eager to learn

Class 2 children are full of energy, more confident, eager to learn and looking for more social interaction.

Stories include animal fables and legends from different countries and cultures. Legends of the lives of saints provide inspiration for children and often the basis for a play.

Reading and writing develops along with skill in times tables and mathematics. Cursive writing helps children to acquire fluency in handwriting and the children feel more confident as their skills develop.



Sample timetable Class 2

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Lesson 1 08:15-09:05	Main Lesson	Main Lesson	Main Lesson	Main Lesson	Main Lesson
Lesson 2 09:10-10:10	Main Lesson	Main Lesson	Main Lesson	Main Lesson	Main Lesson
Break 10:10-10:35					
Lesson 3 10:40-11:30	Numeracy	German	Eurythmy	Numeracy	Handwork
Lesson 4 11:35-12:25	Spanish	Literacy	Wellbeing	Literacy	Spanish
Lunch 12:30-13:20		School Finishes			School Finishes
Lesson 5 13:25-14:15	Outdoor Education		Literacy	German	
Lesson 6 14:20-15:10	Outdoor Education		Numeracy	Art	



Class 2 May Festival 2021

Class 2 handwork



The Class 3 Child: Becoming more grounded

At some point around their ninth year the children go through a period in their development when parents may see, for the first time, their child experience a feeling of separation from the rest of the world.

The curriculum meets this stage of development by directing the child towards practical activities and by introducing Farming and Building Main Lessons. This helps the children to re-connect with the world in a new way, and feel secure that they can build a shelter, grow food and clothe themselves - basic human needs. Landwork connects the work of the Main Lesson to other areas of the curriculum and to all that our wonderful estate offers.

The narrative content during this year includes stories from the Old Testament and stories that describe life and work on the land.

Literacy is developed through the written content of the Main Lessons and Grammar work includes the different qualities of verbs, adjectives and nouns.

In Maths, long multiplication and division are introduced, as are the concepts of measurement: volume, length, weight and time.

The subject lesson curriculum expands to include two Gym and Games lessons in the Gymnasium.

Homework may be introduced in Class 3 with simple tasks related to the Main Lesson. From Class 5 subject teachers may also set tasks to be completed at home. The aim is to encourage the development of good, independent working habits that will benefit the child as he or she moves up the school and later in life.

The amount of homework is gradually increased to allow pupils to develop the necessary independent working skills needed for Middle School projects and in time for the demands of the Upper School.

Children are encouraged to manage their time well so that hobbies and interests can be pursued and regular musical instrumental practice undertaken and balanced with the demands of homework. Parents are advised to check with their child's teachers as to expectations regarding homework, as requirements may vary.

Sample timetable Class 3

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Lesson 1 08:15-09:05	Main Lesson	Main Lesson	Main Lesson	Main Lesson	Main Lesson
Lesson 2 09:10-10:10	Main Lesson	Main Lesson	Main Lesson	Main Lesson	Main Lesson
Break 10:10-10:35					
Lesson 3 10:40-11:30	Numeracy	French	Handwork	French	Outdoor Education
Lesson 4 11:35-12:25	German	Gym	German	Gym	Outdoor Education
Lunch 12:30-13:20					School Finishes
Lesson 5 13:25-14:15	Handwork	Art	Numeracy	Numeracy	
Lesson 6 14:20-15:10	Wellbeing	Literacy	Literacy	Eurythmy	



Class 3 Shelter Projects 2021

Examples of Class 4 work from the Midsummer Exhibitions 2021



The Class 4 Child: Thirsty for new learning experiences

Children now appear more grounded and robust. These young 'Vikings' meet their match in the characters and adventures of the Norse Myths which provide much of the narrative content for this year.

In mathematics, the foundations for work with fractions are laid, alongside the revision and development of skills dealing with the four processes.

Science finds a focus in the Man and Animal Main Lesson, where animals are studied in relation to the human being. This provides the basis for the first independent written and illustrated project and gives children the opportunity to present to the class what they have learned about an animal of their choice.

The focus of Geography Main Lessons is a local one and an opportunity for children to explore the landscape and history of the local surroundings. Walks, maps and sometimes an overnight camp are all features of this Main Lesson.

Sample timetable Class 4

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Lesson 1 08:15-09:05	Main Lesson	Main Lesson	Main Lesson	Main Lesson	Main Lesson
Lesson 2 09:10-10:10	Main Lesson	Main Lesson	Main Lesson	Main Lesson	Main Lesson
Break 10:10-10:35					
Lesson 3 10:40-11:30	Numeracy	Recorders	Wellbeing	Numeracy	Literacy
Lesson 4 11:35-12:25	Gym	Art	Literacy	French	Orchestra
Lunch 12:30-13:20					
Lesson 5 13:25-14:15	German	Gym	Handwork	Outdoor Education	Eurythmy
Lesson 6 14:20-15:10	Eurythmy	Choir	German	Outdoor Education	French



The Class 5 Child: Harmony and balance

Sometimes referred to as 'the heart of childhood', this is a time when parents and teachers glimpse the grace and balance in the child's movement and body.

Children enjoy the Main Lesson riches of ancient cultures such as Ancient India, Egypt, Mesopotamia, Persia and Greece.

In Mathematics, work continues on fractions including the introduction of decimal fractions. Freehand Geometry is developed out of previous work in Form Drawing lessons, and a study of plants provides the basis for the Science Main Lessons.

Geography is expanded to include a study of the British Isles and heralds a further expansion in the Middle School into Europe and the rest of the world.



A highlight of the year and of the study of Ancient Greece is the Olympic Camp, which takes place at Michael Hall during the summer term. Steiner Waldorf schools from this country and Europe are invited to three days of training in Olympic sports — running (including the marathon), javelin, discus, wrestling, high jump, long jump - all culminating in a day-long event complete with Olympic flame and medal ceremony.

Sample timetable Class 5

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Lesson 1 08:15-09:05	Main Lesson	Main Lesson	Main Lesson	Main Lesson	Main Lesson
Lesson 2 09:10-10:10	Main Lesson	Main Lesson	Main Lesson	Main Lesson	Main Lesson
Break 10:10-10:35					
Lesson 3 10:40-11:30	Literacy	Art./Handwork	Numeracy	Gym	Gym
Lesson 4 11:35-12:25	German	Eurythmy	French	Eurythmy	Orchestra
Lunch 12:30-13:20					
Lesson 5 13:25-14:15	Wellbeing	German	Literacy	French	Outdoor Education
Lesson 6 14:20-15:10	Choir	Recorders	Art./Handwork	Numeracy	Outdoor Education

Frequently asked Questions in the Lower School:

What is a Main Lesson?

In the course of a school year there will be between 10 and 12 Main Lesson blocks, taught by the Class Teacher where an age-appropriate theme will be developed over a period of 3 to 4 weeks. Main Lesson themes include subjects that meet the needs of the child based on an understanding of child development. The Main Lesson is made up of three parts: a rhythmic part where music, movement, recitation and games are learnt; a second period of absorbing new content and re-elaborating what has already been learnt; and thirdly, a task or assignment involving written bookwork, drawing and mathematical practice. (Full Main Lesson Chart on the back page).

What will be done to support my child in making the transition from Kindergarten to Class 1?

The Class teachers will gently steer a process whereby a warm and supportive environment for formal learning is created. The Kindergarten and Class 1 Teachers work very closely together during this transition.

My child cannot play the recorder, how will they catch up?

Generally, extra catch-up lessons are given to children who join a class after Class 3 and have had no recorder experience.

My child is already reading, will they be allowed to read in class?

Reading is taught after writing in Waldorf schools in Class 1, there will be opportunities and free times when a child will be able to read the books provided, ones that fit in with the curriculum for the year.

My child is used to much longer school days, why are they so short?

The curriculum and timetable are very full at Michael Hall, and our experience is that a gradual approach to full days is most suitable for younger children. On short days there is afternoon provision, where the children have outside playtime and organised craft activities for Kindergarten and Classes 1 and 2.

Will my child find it easy to transition from mainstream to Steiner-Waldorf education?

Every effort is made to make this transition as easy as possible and generally speaking this is achieved within half a term or a term.

My child loves sporting activities, why do they only start formal sports lessons in Class 3?

This curriculum choice is a question regarding what is appropriate for the age of a child; in our experience the consciousness required for formal Games emerges around the 9th year.

How old does my child have to be to take the school bus?

Children can travel by bus from Class 1. Please see the website or our Parent Portal for more information.

How can I support my child's education at home?

This will be a question that can be best answered by your Class Teacher, but anything that fosters a healthy routine which includes plenty of breathing-out space and good sleep will benefit the child in the Lower School.

Who do I talk to if my child is having problems in class?

Your first port of call is your child's Class Teacher.

Is there any suggested literature that I can read to better understand the curriculum/education?

Yes! There is a Parent's Library which stocks many books about Steiner-Waldorf education, please ask at Reception.

Can my child visit the class for a few days following acceptance to the school?

This is often arranged so that a child can have an experience of the class and the teacher, prior to their start date which may be some time ahead.

What if my child doesn't like the teacher?

Strangely enough, this doesn't happen very often! There may be a teacher a child likes more than another, but all the teaching staff are trained to be inclusive and welcoming to all children.

Do you support children with Special Educational Needs or disabilities?

Yes, some children's needs can be met, we have a Learning Support department and a Senco.

When do you start to teach Science and Maths?

Science is central to our curriculum and, in a gentle way, starts as early as Class 1. In the Middle School we use Maths resources which match the content level of mainstream schooling and meet the diverse needs of all children. In Main Lessons the content is deepened to an extent that is not possible in the state school system. We have had very good results in our exams and many students go on to study Science and Maths at top universities.

Why children are not encouraged to use screens in the Lower School?

In our experience modern children may often become alienated not only from nature, but from each other as they focus on their screens; Waldorf education aims to give the children the faculty to create inner pictures that have been stimulated by actively appealing to their imaginations.

Will my child catch up with ICT if they don't use computers before 13 years of age?

By the time the pupils reach Class 8 the techniques they would have learnt much earlier will have become obsolete; starting fresh in Class 8 has not as yet proved a difficulty for any of our pupils.

What is the Steiner-Waldorf curriculum?

The Steiner-Waldorf curriculum is based on the pedagogical suggestions made by the Austrian philosopher Rudolf Steiner. It aims to bring content and methods that meet age-appropriate needs. In the Early Years the main principle is to foster a sense of goodness through everything the children encounter. In the Lower School the principle transforms into an education of beauty, where content is presented by engaging the feeling life of the child. This not only provides a rich inner experience but also enables the children to recall what they have learnt with enthusiasm. Teaching methods also include learning through doing, and what the children learn experientially they can reflect on later.

Other useful information

Attendance

Attendance and punctuality at school is important for the balanced education and development of our children and we expect all children, who are fit and healthy, to attend school in term time, every day. We do all we can to encourage all children to attend and be punctual. A key factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school and schooling both within school and the home, and to this end we strive to make our school a safe, happy and rewarding place of learning. Parents are asked to ensure that pupils arrive in school on time and not to take holidays during term time. The doors open at 8am and pupils are expected to be either at their places and ready to learn or (for the Upper School) in Registration ready to say the Morning Verse by 8.15am. Registration formally closes at 8.30am.

Gym Kit

Full Gym Kit information: <http://www.michaelhall.co.uk/gym-kits>

EVERY ITEM MUST BE MARKED WITH THE STUDENT'S NAME

Afternoon Club

Afternoon club is organised for children in Classes 1, 2 & 3 who would like to come on their short days. They are able to enjoy playing in small groups, usually some outdoor games and will also partake in seasonal art and craft projects. To book into Afternoon Club for a term, please visit the website or contact Reception.

Ad-hoc sessions may be available if there are spaces, please contact Reception in this instance.

Homework Club

Homework Club is for children from Classes 1 - 8 and runs from 15:10 to 16:05 every day and is in place to support families for the following reasons:

- Staff children needing childcare
- Siblings waiting for older children to finish school
- Parents needing to meet with a teacher
- Children travelling by bus
- Emergencies

To book our Homework Club please see the Parent Portal (or contact Reception).

What our parents say about the Lower School.

"We love MH. From the moment you arrive in the grounds an air of calm surrounds you. Children seem overwhelmingly full of happiness and delight. Parents, teachers and staff are incredibly welcoming and friendly."

"We discovered Steiner education, and Michael Hall, when we seriously began to research education and consider the best schooling option for our children to ensure that they develop a life-long love of learning and become happy and confident adults. We moved house, changed jobs and left friends behind, in order that our two children could join Michael Hall and from day one. When my three year old ran, beaming, into Kindergarten with barely a glance behind him, we felt confident we'd made the right decision."

Lower School children quotes

"That's the trouble with teachers.... They get you to do things!"
(Age 6)

"Do you just play all day at your new school, do you just play all day?" said an old school friend.

"Well, we play but we are learning too."

"What do you mean?"

"Well, it's sort of like this, you are being taught, but in a really kind way!"
(New boy, Age 8)

"Mama, what are we doing today?"

"We are going to have a relaxing day at home!"

"Oh"

"I've worked really hard this week and for 6 days, I need a rest today."

"Well I worked REALLY hard this week too, I had to do 47 x 6!"

(Age 9)

