



What to expect in
the Lower School





What to expect in the Lower School...

Lower School starts in Class 1 (age 6) to Class 5 (age 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 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.

Jacqueline Courtenay
Head of Lower & Middle School

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		

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. The lives of saints provide inspiration for children and are often the basis for their play.

Reading and writing develops along with skill in timetables 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	

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 mathematics, 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.



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	

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 human 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 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 Childhood 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.

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 with 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 an optional afternoon provision, where the children have outside playtime and organised craft activities for Classes 1,2 and 3.

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 9 years old.

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.

Can my child have a taster day?

The School does offer taster days for class 2 and above if requested by the parents and these take place after the interview.

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 as part of our Inclusion Team.

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 mathematics 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 very good results in our exams and many students go on to study science and mathematics 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.

Will my child have homework?

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 Admissions process:

To apply for a place for your child, please scan the QR code or apply via our website www.michaelhall.co.uk/admissions/apply

After we have received your online application we will be in touch to request further details and documents to support your child's application.

You will then be invited for interview with the Class Teacher(s) and our Inclusion team. Taster days are also available on request following interview.

For any queries regarding admissions please contact admissions@michaelhall.co.uk



What parents say about Michael Hall

“My son has truly blossomed from the care, style of teaching & sensitivity with which the staff at Michael Hall consistently demonstrate & apply to the daily routine of school life.”

“My child is well spirited and is held as an individual by her class teacher which has allowed her to remain curious about herself and the world.”

“Michael Hall truly values each child as a human being. This then means each pupil’s skills are given space to grow, with remarkable results.”

