



# The Steiner Waldorf Curriculum

for Classes

9 & 10

**Michael Hall**  
a Steiner Waldorf School



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# Waldorf Curriculum in Classes 9 and 10

The Upper School at Michael Hall offers the exciting, contemporary and innovative Waldorf programme that is designed to support the developmental stages of the teenage years. The Waldorf Curriculum runs alongside the GCSEs and is enjoyed by all students. Based on the internationally recognised Steiner Waldorf Curriculum, our programme is designed to:

- o meet the needs of the developing adolescent
- o enable students to reach their highest potential
- o cultivate independent, self-motivated learning
- o develop healthy social awareness and a sense of responsibility.

The wide variety of Main Lessons, Craft programmes, Movement, Music, Eurythmy and up to seven examination subjects weave throughout the students' daily life to support and balance their education and help them develop their quite remarkable potential.

At Michael Hall the student is placed at the centre of the education, and we work hard to foster a supportive parent and teacher relationship to enhance each child's academic and social wellbeing.



# Main Lessons Class 9

Main Lessons in Class 9 have been taken from the following areas of study.

## **ART - THE HISTORY OF ART**

This Main Lesson introduces and traces the history and development of Art from the ancient Egyptian world through the Greek and Roman civilisations up to and including the early Christian Art of the Catacombs and Mosaics.

In their studies, students will learn how landscape, culture, architecture and beliefs interweave and are reflected in the particular style of the era. In studying the art of the Greek civilisation one can trace the gradual shift from the heavy influence of the Egyptian culture to the more lifelike art inspired by the human form.

The students then turn their attention to Rome; the centre of the New World where the buildings reflect the greater sense of structure and authority and military might.

## **BIOLOGY - ENERGY, MOVEMENT & LIFE**

Naturally there is some overlap with subjects covered in GCSE, but the way this is done is very different in Main Lesson, with less emphasis on facts and more on ideas and processes. This is often where we can really enthuse the students.

The Class 9 Biology Main Lesson explores the ways in which energy and movement are connected in living things.

We start with where living things get their energy from, moving on to how they control and direct it. This takes us into the ways that cells are able to move, and how cells en masse (e.g. in muscles) can cause larger movements. We then look at the way muscles and skeletons are related, finishing with a look at different forms of locomotion in animals.

## **CHEMISTRY - CARBON CHEMISTRY**

This Main Lesson takes as its theme the element Carbon, the basis of all life on Earth. We begin following the Carbon Cycle by exploring how carbon dioxide in the air is fixed through photosynthesis in plants to make glucose, and then condensed into the energy stores of starch and the tough plant 'skeleton' of cellulose. These are nature's polymers and in exploring polymer science, the students make a plastic from potato starch. Returning to glucose, the students experience how yeasts act on the glucose to produce ethyl alcohol, which they then oxidise to its aldehyde and then to its acid, known to them already as vinegar. Through the Carbon Main Lesson, students of Class 9 can develop an understanding of how the living plant, in the process of life, death and decay, forms the coal and oil on which modern civilisation has developed such a dependence and experience for themselves the process of oil distillation and the different qualities of the various fractions.

## **CONTEMPORARY ISSUES**

Students investigate a number of interconnected global issues including population change, uneven development, migration and variations in health and life expectancy. Through group discussions and project work, students will be encouraged to consider and evaluate different viewpoints, as well as learn how to assess the validity and accuracy of different data and information sources, before finally presenting their own ideas on how to make our world a fairer place for all.

## **DRAMA**

Class 9 will have the opportunity to practically explore drama games, mask, improvisation, chorus work and text work in their drama main lesson. The skills learnt during this year will greatly enhance their participation in the various Upper School productions.

## **ELECTRONIC DESIGN**

Electronic design helps students to design and make quality electronic products with creativity, originality and flair using a wide range of electronic components with appropriate materials to package the electronic circuit. Working through the design process, students are tasked with designing and making their own amplified speaker. The packaging of the electronic circuit can include individually designed cases made from a range of resistant materials, textiles, card or recycled materials. This Main Lesson requires students to design creatively, develop their ability to consider sustainability and environmental impact on their designing. It also provides the students with the opportunity to design and make an electronic product using new technologies and modern electronic devices.

## **ENGLISH - Narrative TRADITION**

Upper School English Teachers aim to provide a rich experience of English Literature and enhance the students' own creative abilities as well as their acquisition of skills. In Main Lessons through Classes 9 and 10, we give an overview of the development of Literature and human consciousness through time.

In this Main Lesson, Class 9 will explore the narrative tradition in the English language. We will begin with Chaucer's General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales and students will experiment with the pronunciation of Middle English while also learning about Chaucer's representative medieval cast of characters. We will develop this theme, working as a group to develop narrators who represent modern society and whose stories may need to be told. Using narrative poems by Robert Browning and Carol Ann Duffy, we will experiment with perspective. Reading and discussing 'The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time' as our central piece will allow Class 9 students to explore the perspectives of people with learning differences as well as the unusual structure of his narrative - two stories running alongside one another. This structure helps them to explore Christopher's struggle to fit in with the expectations of normal society in an entertaining way and helps the students see why he reacts as he does in stressful situations. Using various games, exercises and drama activities, they will experiment with alternate ways of expressing themselves, working in pairs and groups to convey narrative in a creative way.

## **GYM**

During this 2-week Main Lesson, the focus is on getting the students active and moving. It starts each morning with a run outside and then indoor social games. The students have the opportunity to improve a physical skill and self-discipline of their choosing from a range of activities such as juggling, slackline, uni-cycling, basketball shooting etc, practicing each day for 20mins, which develops their will power and focus. They assess their current ability level and set their own target of what they want to achieve within the two weeks. There is a theory element brought each day covering anatomy and physiology and the body's responses and adaptations to exercise. The students also work on their posture and spatial awareness through a series of short movement exercises, built upon each day.

## MUSIC

Class 9: In this Main Lesson we discover the Baroque period in music through presentations, aural analysis and artistic response. The students are asked to respond visually to the music we listen to and create their own compositions using Baroque musical forms. Through listening to Vivaldi's Four Seasons, we will explore Baroque stylistic features, the Baroque orchestra, and the difference between Programmatic and Abstract music. We also discover how this genre of music continues to influence modern, popular styles.

## MUSICAL

Classes 9 & 11 combine forces to stage a musical in the summer term. Following the heart-warming success of Fiddler on the Roof, Les Misérables and Oliver! and Anything Goes, this has become a much-anticipated production in the Upper School. Whether a student wishes to be on or off stage, everyone contributes to the success of the production and each staging inspires miracles and transformations. What will be next?



## PHYSICS - POWER AND TRANSPORT

In this Main Lesson, as the students of Class 9 are grappling with their emergence into the adult world, and are wondering how they can make things happen; wondering what they might achieve when they pit themselves against the world; we mirror this by following the development of technology, especially as it relates to Transport, exploring the ways humankind have found to make things happen.

We start with the 'Big Six' fundamental machines, moving through different arrays of machine elements to water pumps and steam engines, with an aside into internal combustion engines, before returning to steam turbines and following that through to jet engines and rocket engines. Time permitting we may move on to other forms of propulsion in space-flight, as well as fuel cells and electric vehicles.

# Arts & Crafts Class 9

Students in Class 9 will work in various arts and crafts rotations throughout the year. Small groups of approximately 5-9 students will experience the specialist techniques and skills within the following subjects.

## **BASKETRY**

The aim of this course is to introduce the students to the craft of basket making and identify different types of materials used by basket makers all over the world. We will look at the centre-cane material, discovering where this is grown and how else it can be used.

Students will work on a round-shaped basket, learning how to prepare and handle the material and tools used in basket making. They will start with the base, measure and cut the sticks, tie and weave around the slath, insert side stakes and work up the sides, learning several basic weaving techniques. They will have a clear vision of the finished shape, the ability to maintain an even tension, care in positioning the stakes and making adjustments where necessary. All essential skills to achieve symmetry in basket making.

Centre-cane is an easily managed material which allows the students to become familiar with the various techniques required to weave a basket.

## **BLACK AND WHITE DRAWING**

Diagonal shaded drawing is a method of drawing which concentrates upon the qualities of light and darkness, using rhythmical strokes in a left to right direction. This technique leaves one free to enter into the living qualities of tone and plane, allowing room for inspiration. The demands on the student are quite different to those usually employed whilst drawing from nature; they are enabled through the interplay of planes to rediscover the workings of light and darkness lying hidden in the world of form.

The process is a conscious one and opens a new vista of artistic experience that has as its focus, phenomenology rather than effect. Each student will gradually find their own style. A certain self-discipline is also acquired through this approach to drawing.

The student is guided towards their own experience of living in a mobile equipoise, between the expansion in light and levity, and the weight in darkness and in gravity.

During the course, different media can be used, such as charcoal, ink and pencil. Time permitting, we explore a variety of techniques and processes, which include print making, line drawing, modelling with tone, pen and ink.

## **JOINERY**

In Class 9 the students build on the skills acquired in Class 8. Having already accustomed themselves to making components that form a structure (a simple bookshelf), they now tackle a more challenging project. They work from a drawing for the first time, to produce a CD rack or stand. Both projects incorporate the 'stopped housing' joint. The students have to plan and mark out their work carefully, and then apply themselves with accuracy and focus to cut and fit the joints. There is opportunity to individualise their work and produce a piece that is both practical and aesthetic.



## **METALWORK – COPPER WORK**

Students begin Metalwork by making an oil lamp and vase. Starting with a flat copper disc, they gradually raise the edges up to form a vessel, gaining height and reducing radius. It is an extraordinary, even magical process to witness and be responsible for.

The copper sheet is softened through annealing with a blowtorch, changing colour from pink, to yellow, green, purple, blue, through a dark grey to a glowing cherry red; then cleaned of oxides in the 'pickle'. With each round of work the material is gradually hardened, requiring repeated annealing and cleaning. The metal-workshop is a thrilling place to work with flames and acid baths.

Precise technique is required, care and attention to detail. Students must be ready to go back and rework mistakes. Full concentration is essential as the copper is guided over the planishing stake to smooth out the piece, both hands working in unison.

## **POTTERY**

The adolescent is a person passing from childhood into maturity. From the beauty and confidence of a twelve year old to the awkwardness and potential uncertainty of a fifteen year old the harmony of life can be lost. The inner life of students can be in turmoil, full of strong fluctuating emotions. The aim of the pottery teacher in Class 9 is to help centre the students within themselves.

We begin by looking at the human figure and its proportions. The students then make a series of sculptures of humans in different positions for example standing, walking, relating to another human and even floating in space. While creating these figures the soul and spiritual qualities of the students are unconsciously explored.

As a conclusion to the series they are asked to make a simple coil pot of their own design. Each pot made however, is entirely unique. Some strong and tall others fragile, more tentative. The pot by its nature is a container. It requires balance and uprightness in order to function. However, it is the quiet space that is created within the walls that is by far the most valuable.



# Main Lessons Class 10

Main Lessons in Class 10 have been taken from the following areas of study.

## **ART - Middle Ages, Renaissance and Manuscripts**

In this main lesson students will be encouraged to investigate, reflect, and identify developments on Medieval and Renaissance artistic manifestations. The lessons will take an overview on painting, sculpture, and architecture, but will focus on Manuscript productions. Students will experience how medieval circumstances and beliefs reflect on the aesthetics of Illuminated Manuscripts, and how Block Books and printmaking reveal the new cultural development in Renaissance. Their approach starts from visual insights and observations into Illuminations, and it is then supported by artistic experimentation and factual research. All students will undergo the experience of producing 2 book pages: one illuminated page, including capital letter, border, and text, including gold gilding; and one Block Book print page. This artistic experience is deepened by experimenting with traditional techniques, close to the traditional methods used in Middle Ages and Renaissance. All students work will be bound as the Class Codex Manuscript. By the end of the main lesson students will be able to recognise the difference between illumination and Block printing and will be able to relate the different aesthetics of these to the different cultural moments that produced them.

## **BIOLOGY - GENETICS & EVOLUTION**

In this Main Lesson we explore the big ideas of Biology:

- Different ideas about how life itself arose in the first place;
- Cells as the fundamental building-blocks of life;
- How species evolve;
- How DNA is both the medium for genetic transfer between generations and determines the activities of cells;
- Some of the possibilities and problems presented by modern Biotechnology.

We consider the currently prevailing theories, and learn about the discoveries and insights that led us to them.

In Classes 11 and 12 we also offer A-level Biology courses for those who just have to learn more, as well as Botany, and sometime Zoology and Embryology Main Lessons.

## **CHEMISTRY - RATES OF REACTION**

In this Main Lesson we explore the fastest and slowest reactions in the world and through experimental work we learn to measure the rate of a reaction using different methods. We investigate the factors affecting the rate of a reaction, including reversible reactions, again with practical work, and spend time recording observations and drawing conclusions using scientific theory. The main lesson enhances the content covered in GCSE Science.

## **ENGLISH - SPOKEN WORD POETRY**

In this Main Lesson, students study examples of spoken word poetry. They also work on writing their own examples of poems, raps and spoken word poetry, paying close attention to their use of rhythm, rhyme, vocabulary and poetic techniques. They often enjoy exploring protest issues through their poetry, writing about current topical issues. Preparing a performance of their work using a range of performance strategies, such as gesture, tone of voice and voice projection, students explore dramatic techniques and grow in confidence in presenting their own creative work.

## **HISTORY - ANCIENT CIVILISATION**

Students will explore a range of ancient civilisations from all over the world, including the ones that flourished around the Mediterranean (Greco-Roman, Egyptian) and Celtic; but also, others from Asia and Meso-South America. People, Gods and Goddesses, their stories and myths, written on tablets, papyrus, skin or walls will be among the themes covered. Students will have their own specific project around an allocated (or chosen) civilisation and will also contribute to an Album of Civilisations together with the rest of the class. Aside from the acquisition of new knowledge and the academic and creative aspects of this project, the course offers many debatable themes, including the one we will be starting with: what does the word 'civilisation' mean to you?

## **MATHS - TRIGONOMETRY**

Maths is still an integral part of the GCSE Curriculum and students have an opportunity to explore Trigonometry via a Main Lesson format. Students to look at trigonometry from a wider perspective and engage in much more problem-solving type activities. Students discover how ratios in similar triangles are the basis of forming the ratios in trigonometry, apply these trigonometric ratios of Sine, Cosine and Tangent to simple right angles triangles and then onto more complex non-right-angled triangles using the sine and cosine rules, to include finding area. Students were given opportunities to incorporate all these aspects of trigonometry to various problem-solving activities, requiring the pulling together many other mathematical concepts and skills. The Main Lesson also has a project element which allows students to research and find out about various applications of trigonometry in more detail and present this to the rest of the class, widening their understanding of how trigonometry is used in everyday life.

## **PERFECT PLANET**

Students investigate the impacts of human activity on our planet, including the causes and effects of climate change. Students investigate and suggest different ways individuals, businesses and governments can mitigate the impacts of climate change and promote sustainable development. We ask questions such as what have been the positive and negative impacts of human activity on our planet? What are the various natural and human causes of climate change? As well as, what are climate 'tipping points' and why do they pose such a threat?

## **PHYSICS - GRAVITY**

In this Main Lesson, as the students of Class10 are trying to get a sense of how they fit into the wider context of the world around them, and feel themselves increasingly drawn into greater social engagement, we mirror this by following the development of our understanding of the solar system and of the gravity which makes it all cohere.

We journey from Classical times through the Middle Ages to the watershed of the Heliocentric revelations of Copernicus and Galileo; then through Kepler to Newton, with a temporary sense of security before meeting Einstein's Theory of General Relativity. Finally we face the fact that although we can describe and predict its effect very well, we are still very unsure what Gravity actually is or how it is caused.

Time permitting, we may also look at different ways of approaching Flight, or otherwise defying gravity.

# Arts & Crafts in Class 10

Students in Class 10 will work in various arts and crafts rotations throughout the year. Small groups of approximately 5-9 students will experience the specialist techniques and skills within the following subjects.

## **BASKETRY**

Students will be given a brief overview of the history of the willow industry – how willow was used in the past and what it is used for today; how the decline of the industry came about with the development of modern materials and its recent revival with growing interest in rural crafts. Focusing on locally grown willow we will identify the various types available and how they might be used and why it is important to prepare the willow by soaking and mellowing the rods. Beginning with a round basket the students will revisit some of the weaves, tools, terms and techniques learnt last year as well as those that are specific to willow. The differences between working with centre cane and willow are quickly realised; much greater strength and dexterity in the hands is required to achieve shape and balance in the making of a willow basket. Throughout this course the students will solidify and expand upon their basket making knowledge and skills.

## **BOOKBINDING**

This course offers a brief overview on the development of Bookbinding as a craft. The Students are introduced to the basic skills in working with paper, cardboard and various covering materials. They learn how to recognise the grain in paper, different sewing techniques for binding books as well as the best use of glues.

In class 10 the students learn how to make two single section booklets, and then go on to make a folder or note pad. They learn how to use the gold tooling equipment, allowing them to design a title or pattern for the front cover and giving them the opportunity to print this onto their book. They decorate papers with the paste-paper technique creating patterns on paper to use as covers for their work.

The aim of this subject is to develop accurate and neat working habits. This lays an excellent foundation and develops the basic skills required to go deeper into the subject in the following year.

## **JOINERY**

Having acquired a basic range of hand and tool skills, Class 10 students are ready to progress to a more complicated project. This can be an individual or a group rolling project. An example could be that a small table incorporating a 'mortise and tenon' joint is produced or a large scale item intended for the use of the school and its pupils. They first make individual working drawings, based on their own choice of proportions, with an opportunity to add decoration or form. The students are expected to take responsibility for their task, increasing their confidence and capacity for independent work and within a group, learning organisation and management skills alongside the craft.

## **METALWORK** Blacksmithing

At the blacksmith's forge the destructive and creative element of fire must be tamed to craft the most iconic of metals: iron. Through making a fire tool (poker, roasting fork) students learn to draw out, twist, cut and shape – some of the basic techniques of blacksmithing. Both heating the iron at the forge and accurately working it at the anvil require presence of mind, constant attention and courage; the iron must be hot enough to be malleable but, too hot, and it will burn in a shower of sparks. Great focus, speed and strength of will are necessary to control the heat of the fire, whilst foreseeing where to strike before the iron cools. The lessons include background on iron, from its origin to its place in industry and health. Students tend to transform themselves during this craft of mastering the fire and handling the hot iron safely. The lessons can build self-confidence in even the most timid of students.



## **POTTERY**

In Class 10 the students make large coiled pots.

They start by designing their own pot on paper. Using their hands they begin to coil and shape the clay. It can be tricky - every time the clay wall is pressed thinner it expands outwards, simple physics! If they want to bring the wall of the pot up more steeply they have to create constant inward pressure to force the mass of clay upwards.

We aim for the pots to balance, beauty and uprightness. The students assess their pots themselves. Has it worked? Is it balanced? How can it be improved? What does it need?

All pots have outer walls, a base, belly and lip but more importantly what is formed is within: us, ourselves. This is the important thing.

Each pot can be a reflection of the personal attributes of the maker: strength, tenderness, vanity and ambition, ease, generosity, petulance, uncertainty, callousness, fussiness, solemnity, exuberance, or absent mindedness all are possibilities. In essence they are all unique and contain the imprint of the person whose hands and soul made it.

# Ethics

The biographies of individuals who have experienced dramatic conversion, or overcome great obstacles and difficulties, or worked out of a strong social conscience are taken to promote discussion on issues of contemporary concern.

In Class 10, the students dedicate six weeks of study to each of the major world religions (Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam) and the final six weeks of the year to religious groups of their own choosing. Representatives of each religion are invited in to speak to the Class about their experience with it. The students then research and make presentations to the Class on a variety of themes to do with religious practice with an emphasis on tolerance and open-mindedness.

# Eurythmy

The Eurythmy curriculum in the Upper School develops and expands, in a more conscious way, the work done in previous years. Throughout the Upper School we continue with exercises that help the students develop Eurythmy techniques and prepare artistic performances of poems and music pieces.

In Class 9, the students first observe familiar movements: lying down, sitting up, standing, and walking etc. They come to understand the relationship of the body to the space around it. This leads to the understanding of the basic principles of Eurythmy. More specifically, we work with contrasts including expansion/contraction; lightness/heaviness; light/dark; joy/sadness etc. In Class 10, we work with exercises dealing with relationships and processes.

# Gym and Games

The aim is to support the students to develop their spatial awareness, coordination, posture and uprightness through the practice of the following activities: Athletics, Badminton, Basketball, Cross Country Running, Fitness, Football, Gymnastics, Hockey, Netball, Orienteering, Rugby-style games, Table Tennis, Tennis, Ultimate Frisbee and Volleyball. In Class 9 the emphasis in our lessons is on channeling and consistently applying effort. The focus of lessons in Class 10 is to be able to participate in a variety of physical activities and sports in a social way. In addition to timetabled lessons the Upper School Students are warmly encouraged to join our After School Sports Clubs: Basketball, Netball and Volleyball. We regularly compete with other schools in these sports.

# Music

Class 9: The students are now members of the Upper School Choir and participate in the significant Festival performances given by the Choir throughout the year. Alongside learning their vocal parts the students are engaged in the study of the fundamentals of music: rhythm, melody and timbre. We further explore the structure and composition of songs where they sing examples from various historical periods. In particular they are introduced to the Baroque period through some of its composers (Bach and Vivaldi) and musical forms (ritornello and fugue).

Class 10: The students continue their vocal work preparing for Choir performances, but also through exploring more popular styles. They study the Classical period (1750–1830): the musical forms of the time (sonata-form), the most famous composers (Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven) and explore Functional Harmony.

# Pastoral Care

At Michael Hall, our continued observation and awareness of students' needs allows early intervention in the resolution of concerns. To facilitate this we have a clear structure of support. The Class Guardian cares for the social well being of the class. Within this, each student will be given (in Class 9) or select (in Class 10) their own Personal Tutor with whom they will meet weekly. In some circumstances, the Guardian, Tutor or Student may also call upon the services of the Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Team to provide more in depth support and guidance.

# Wellbeing (PSHEE) (Class 9 and 10)

In PSHEE programme over Class 9-10 we look at strategies for managing stress, anxiety, depression and the promotion of wellbeing. We explore mental health and the mental health spectrum, support systems and resilience development. In lessons we practise mindfulness, safety in sharing information, qualities of listening and empathy, safety and care for each other, personal healthy relationships and also our relationship and responsibility to the community around us. These areas are brought into PSHEE and deepened further both within Guardian lessons and further PSHEE over the two years.

We also discuss the meaning and practical application of Consent in a variety of circumstances including the legal and moral implications. We further this focus on respect through exploring gender identity, LGBTQ+, addiction and substance abuse and provide information and discussion to enable the making of informed choices. Online-Safety is also discussed with information given along with practical advice and group sharing of information and problems experienced.

Sexual health is also explored with discussions on contraception, pregnancy, STD's and negotiating a safe and consensual relationship. Legal responsibilities are also discussed and information given. First Aid training is also given.

Economic education is introduced from Class 9 and deepened into Class 10 with personal financial management, taxation and national insurance, debt management and financial responsibility, budgeting and some investment discussions.

The above areas are supplemented and extended through external speakers and specialists visiting the class.

# Trips

## SACRED EARTH (Class 9)

Sacred Earth is a community owned land project in the heart of Sussex. Each year, in September, the new Class 9 spends 4 to 5 days camping at the Sacred Earth site near Horam. This is an opportunity for the new class to bond and get to know the Guardians who have taken responsibility for the students' journey through our Upper School. Whilst the project's focus is on re-connecting people and nature, this is also an opportunity for our young people to explore their developing emotional literacy through community derived tasks, whilst enjoying playful outdoor activities that extend their sensory experiences into their surroundings. The programme enables the students to develop deeper connections within themselves, each other and the natural world. The trip encourages them to feel the excitement of discovery as they develop a sense of belonging through discovering their place on the earth.

# World of Work

## WORK EXPERIENCE (Class 10)

Students choose and organise a two week work placement with employers, usually within local commuting distance. As part of the experience of the workplace, students are encouraged to research possible opportunities, and approach companies/ organisations themselves in order to prepare them for the reality of work outside of school. Students are encouraged to start looking for a placement in the Autumn Term.

Work placements are designed to expand the students' horizons beyond the world of school towards the wider working community. Our students undertake a variety of work programmes and on their return to school they present their experiences to peers, teachers, Class 9 and parents.