



Alder Bridge

Steiner-Waldorf School



...where learning is a journey



Welcome to Alder Bridge

Children of today are growing up into a fast changing world, facing challenges requiring flexibility and creativity. The ability to adapt with inner confidence is an essential quality needed in the 21st century: Steiner-Waldorf education helps cultivate the skills and inner strength necessary to meet these challenges.



Alder Bridge Steiner-Waldorf School

We are a co-educational, fully comprehensive, independent school. Founded in 1987 by a pioneering group of parents, the school has grown to offer Steiner-Waldorf education for children from 3 – 13 (Kindergarten – Class 7). We aim to take the current and future classes through to Class 8 (age 14,) the end of the Class Teacher phase. We welcome families from all faiths and cultural backgrounds.

The school is situated in beautiful, semi-rural surroundings in Padworth, Berkshire, approximately half way between Reading and Newbury. We are easily accessible by road and rail, being close to the A4 and 5 minutes walk from the train station.

Our setting is picturesque and much enjoyed. Our gardens provide lots of play and learning opportunities, with woodland, vegetable plots, huge willow structures and simply space to run! Children have an environment in which to develop naturally at Alder Bridge.

'The children develop as self-assured and confident individuals, well prepared for the next phase in their education.' - Ofsted 2008



Steiner-Waldorf Education

Alder Bridge is a Steiner-Waldorf School, part of the largest independent education movement in the world. There are currently 33 Steiner-Waldorf schools in the UK and nearly 1000 schools worldwide, in countries across Europe, Africa, the Americas, Australasia and Asia.

Each Steiner-Waldorf school has its own character, but they each share a common foundation in their understanding of child development based on the theories of Rudolf Steiner. The curriculum that Steiner-Waldorf schools follow covers everything you would expect a school to teach and more, but has the flexibility to bring subjects at a time that the children are most ready to meet them, and in a style that best suits the child.



Implicit in the education is the understanding that each child is unique, and brings with them their own gifts and challenges – this understanding ensures that every child is celebrated for who they are, and enables a class to become a close and socially aware group, full of children who are confident, happy and who love to learn.



Rudolf Steiner and Anthroposophy

Rudolf Steiner (1861 -1925) was an Austrian philosopher whose legacy continues to inspire in fields as diverse as education, architecture, biodynamic farming, medicine, finance, Camphill communities and the arts. Anthroposophy is the philosophy that underlies his work. It embraces a profound understanding of the human as a physical,

psychological and spiritual being, following the path to freedom. Anthroposophy is NOT taught to the children; rather is studied by the teachers in order to further their own development and to aid their understanding of the children in their care.



Kindergarten

The Kindergarten is a bridge from home to school which gives the child a space to explore the world at an unhurried pace. Here, the 3-6 year old develops their physical and social skills, nurturing imagination which is the foundation stone of all future learning.

The morning begins with child-led imaginative play in a space adorned with soft colours and natural toys. Children make what they will with the natural materials at hand – conkers, shells, wooden blocks and planks, and large cloths in beautiful colours. From simple beginnings a house is constructed, which over the course of the morning may transform into a boat when other children join the game. The child's imagination is the source of all play, and through it they are able to explore all aspects of their lives and the world in a way that is meaningful to them.

A seasonal or domestic activity is available at the table, sometimes reflecting the activities in nature, and sometimes preparing for one of our many festivals. Children find a great comfort in the annual flow of festivals that guide us through the year, and in the annual repetition of events in nature. All of these rhythms are beautifully reflected on the nature table; a key feature in every kindergarten.



Children are welcome to join in the preparation of the day's snack too. Whether it is vegetable soup with barley bread on Tuesday, or millet scones with fruit on Wednesday, there is always work for busy hands! Chopping carrots and spreading bread requires the development of small motor skills that will be of great use when a child moves on to the school. When snack time comes, the older children help to serve the meal – just one example of how the older children care for the younger, and how the younger ones learn from the older.



With Ring Time, the children learn seasonal songs and activities; from simple finger rhymes to harvest rhythms. Children are developing the skills necessary for later learning. The young child's natural impulse is to learn through imitation, and the kindergarten teacher works with this inclination in a conscious and creative way. Children are rarely told what to do, but are led by example. In this way the child is helped to feel 'able' right from the beginning of their education. A confident child will learn quickly once they are at school.

Outdoor play and work is a big part of kindergarten life, with our trees, mud piles, sandpit, and vegetable gardens. Children climb, dig, play, and grow food for their snack, and all-weather clothing is essential!

The kindergarten is a pre-school family group sharing games, food, work, and play, and thoroughly enjoying the experience of childhood.





School

Learning is a journey, and one that need not be rushed! Children at Steiner-Waldorf schools are given time to really explore a subject from all angles; imaginative, experiential and academic, before moving on to the next subject. They are also given time to care for their work, to present it beautifully as well as accurately. Children from Steiner-Waldorf schools develop a life-long love of learning.

A child will, ideally, remain with the same Class Teacher for 8 years; from approximately 6–14 years of age. This continuity enables the development of warm trusting relationships, the essence of which lies at the heart of Steiner-Waldorf education. It allows the child freedom from the usual annual readjustment children have to make



in the State system, and it helps to explain why we are able to give children freedom from the excessive rounds of formal tests and exams: continual assessment is integral to the education. For the teacher, this approach allows them to gradually take subjects further as the children grow to new levels of appreciation, objectivity and ability over the years. Maths, English, History, Geography, and the Sciences are all taught by the Class Teacher.

Every morning begins with a two hour period of both intense activity and concentration. Classes sing, recite poetry, play the recorder, stamp or clap through their times tables, learn skipping games, and engage in some mental arithmetic before focusing on the Main Lesson.



The Main Lesson is a 3 or 4 week block of in-depth study of one key subject through which the children also continue to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. Examples of Main Lessons include:

Class 1 - Numbers

Class 2 - Fables

Class 3 - Farming

Class 4 - Man and Animal

Class 5 - Ancient Civilisations

Class 6 - Physics and Chemistry

Class 7 - Astronomy and The Age of Discovery

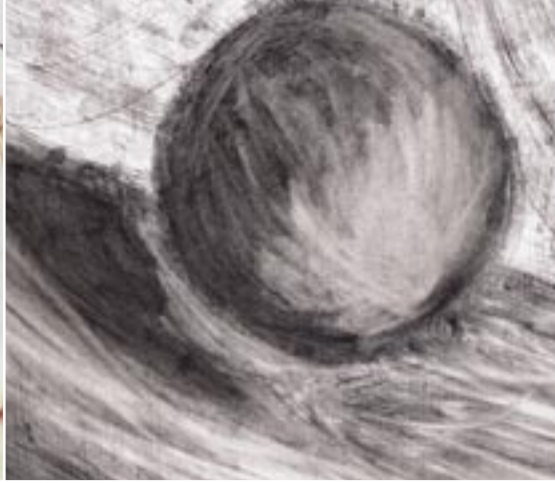
Class 8 - Anatomy

After break time, other subjects are brought by specialist teachers. Children at Alder Bridge generally learn two languages, such as French and German, from the beginning of Class 1. They also have Handwork, Eurythmy, Music and Games. The children learn to play the recorder in Class 1 and join the school Orchestra playing this or another instrument they may be learning independently.

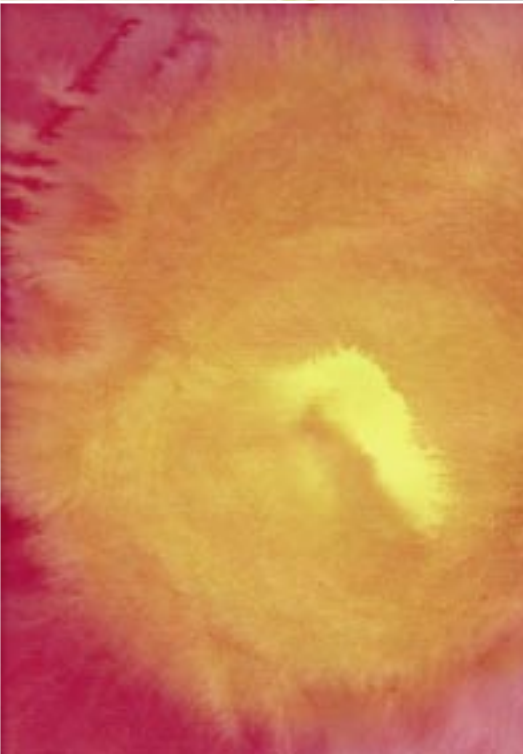
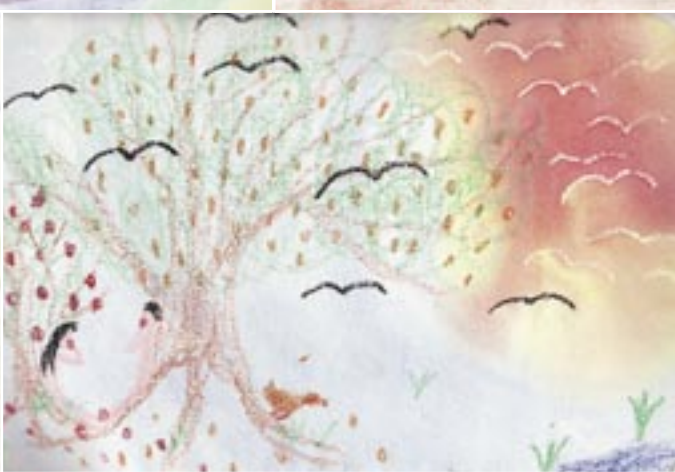
There are many opportunities for deepening learning experiences at Alder Bridge. The Class 3 building project is just one example of how a number of subjects (maths, geography, history and science) may be taught outside the classroom, in a very practical way. When Class 5 take part in the Ancient Olympic Games in Sussex, they are gaining insight and skills they do not access while sat at their desks!

At Alder Bridge children can find the joy in learning and experience the full richness of childhood.





The cat sat on the mat. The cat saw a rat. The cat ate the



$2 + 2 + 2 = 6$
 $6 = 3 + 3$
 $5 + 6 = 11$
 $9 + 0 + 3 = 12$



Our highest endeavour must be to develop free human beings who are able of themselves to impart purpose and direction to their lives.

- Rudolf Steiner

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Reg. Charity No. 297857
Registered in England No. 2158586