

The St Michael Steiner School

NEWSLETTER

11th March 2011
5 Merton Road London SW18 5ST
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Dates for Your Diary

MARCH

Sat 12 Association Meeting

Sat 26 Easter workshop

APRIL

Fri 1 TERM ENDS 12.30pm for
all classes

MAY

Tue 3 **BACK TO SCHOOL**
(NB Change of date)

Wed 11 Class 1 Parents' meeting
7 - 8.30pm

Thur 12 Kindergartens' Parents'
meeting 7 - 8.30pm

Sat 14 Parents' workday (TBC)

Thur 19 Class 2&3 Parents'
meeting 7 - 8.30pm

Sat 21 'A Morning in the
Classroom': a workshop
for parents 9.30 - 12.30

Fri 27 **School ends for half term**
(NB Change of date - No
INSET)

Easter Workshop 26th March

Christine Fynes Clinton and Ann Druitt have been running festival workshops for several years. Their aim is to deepen understanding of why we celebrate festivals and why they have such an important place in Steiner Waldorf education

The St Michael Steiner School

5 Merton Rd Wandsworth
London SW18 5ST

PREPARING FOR EASTER IN THE FAMILY

Through the festival of
LENT to an EASTER CELEBRATION

26th of March 2011
(Saturday 10am - 3pm)

An inspiring informative workshop
with Christine Fynes-Clinton and Ann Druitt
authors of
All Year Round and The Birthday Book

Venue: The St Michael Steiner School
Cost: £15/person or £10/person for the morning
Concessions are available on request.

Please, bring lunch to share!
Please, phone the school at 020 8870 0500
to book for places as soon as possible!

From The Early Years

My Lady Spring is dressed in green
She wears a primrose crown,
And little baby buds and twigs
Are clinging to her gown;
The sun shines if she laughs at all,
But if she weeps the raindrops fall.

In our Early Years Groups our hearts have been gladdened by the arrival of Spring. We have especially enjoyed discovering the first snowdrops and crocuses and gazing up through the canopy of blossoms during our visits to the park.

Our stories and puppet shows have included, "Mother Holle", "Lady Spring and the Flower Children", and at present, "The Tree Which Grew Through The Roof".

Our Shrove Tuesday pancake cafés involved much work: Setting and decorating tables, making menus, taking orders, waiting on tables, providing ambient music and clearing, washing and drying up. All this and cooking and eating pancakes too!



"Hooray, yes, it's pancake café day!"
"I've been busy all morning!"
"I've done lots of hard work!"
"Can I have seconds, please?" (snippets of conversations heard in the pancake café)

One of our children came dressed for Carnival, and his friends rooted through the dressing-up box and the café became, "The Carnival Pancake Café", with customers ranging from cowboys to princesses and gnomes!

Fruit and Vegetable Donations

We would like to remind you that we do rely on your donations of fresh fruits and vegetables each week to supplement our daily snack menus and your contributions are warmly welcome. The daily menus are posted on the Early Years notice board in the stairwell.

Leigha Hipkin

On behalf of the Early years team



What's Happening in the Classrooms?

In class 1 we have been enjoying our Wednesdays as Rising Class 2 children and have taken on the responsibility of being good role models to the Rising Class 1 (aka Big children in KG) children. The Main Lesson time has been filled with poems, songs and great games and then the children love eating their snack. After having an extra long playtime outside, we have a handwork lesson where the



Rising Class 1 children have started making their hobby horses. Then comes the best time (after snack of course) of the morning - indoor playtime. This is much enjoyed and way too short. The Class 1 rising children then leave so soon and hardly calming down, we sit down for lunch before heading off to our weekly outing to the Common.

The Common is very exciting because we have seen that some of the trees are blossoming and that there are daffodils shooting through the ground. In our Main Lesson we have started talking about Nature and have heard some wonderful stories about different plants and other home surroundings. We have even started writing with pencils.

When we came back from our holidays, we *finally* learnt how to play our recorders and even played 'without practising or anything' (comment from a child). It's easy at the moment with only one hole to worry about though... wait until we have 5 holes next year.

Lara Koppers

In Class 4&5, on the last day of a month-long maths block, a boy was heard to say "The sums you give us get easier and easier!" So that's good. Now we have started a Botany block. The first week was an overview of the plant world in general; how there is no beginning or end to the cycle of life; that all living things are constantly changing; that all plants need air and water, sun and earth. In the next three weeks, we will be studying and comparing the forms and lives of individual species that we can find growing around the school. At the same time, we are drawing and painting plants as well as constructing geometrical figures from the plant world.

Amanda Bell

Education News

A guide to post-qualification anxieties

Times Higher Education, 17 February 2011

The debate about PQA presumes that the only qualifications that matter for entry to higher education are A levels. This in turn makes the leap of faith that there is a complete correlation between A-level performance and success on a course of higher education, the evidence for which is very sparse, with the exception of those gaining the highest and lowest A-level results.

There are today many institutions and courses where ability to benefit and talent are measured by means other than crude A-level results, sometimes outside the traditional Universities and Colleges Admissions Service process. An example is the use of auditions and interviews by music conservatoires and the existence of non-Ucas admission routes, such as the Conservatoires UK Admissions Service.

The imposition of a "one-size-fits-all" PQA system would not be acceptable if it attempted to crush the diversity of the sector.

Mike Milne-Picken, Academic registrar, Royal Northern College of Music.

UK children 'reading too early'

Children are too young to learn to read when they first start school in the UK, an academic claims. Pushing reception pupils too hard could put them off for life, especially boys, says Professor Lilian Katz. She believes government plans to teach children to read even earlier, at pre-school, are a mistake. Dr Katz, a professor of education at the University of Illinois in the USA, thinks policy makers are pushing children too hard too early. Most youngsters in the UK start learning to read and write in reception when they start primary school - often before their fifth birthday. In Scandinavian countries formal teaching begins much later, usually when children are six or seven.

" The evidence... suggests starting formal instruction early is more damaging for boys than girls "

Dr Katz, who was addressing an international conference on foundation-stage learning at the University of Oxford, said there was a danger that the British model could put children off reading for life if pupils were forced to learn before they were ready. She said: "The evidence we have so far is that if you start formal teaching of reading very early the children do well in tests but when you follow them up to the age of 11 or 12 they don't do better than those who have had a more informal approach.

"The evidence also suggests starting formal instruction early is more damaging for boys than girls. Boys are expected to be active and assertive but during formal instruction they are being passive not active. In most cultures, girls learn to put up with passivity earlier and better than boys."

She suggests a more informal approach tuned in to children's "natural nosiness" is much better and cites the example of children going to visit a local bakery and then writing down what they have seen and experienced.

"Vocabulary must be learnt in context," she asserted. Dr Katz - who lectures around the world on early years education - also emphasises that English is a very difficult language to learn. "What's the hurry?" she said. "Some people think that because English is so difficult you should start early but that's wrong. If it is so difficult, wait until they're older and do it in a natural context... Academic instruction isn't necessary in pre-school"

Source: BBC News

SCHOOL NEWS

ACCOMMODATION NEEDED FOR EASTER TEACHERS' CONFERENCE

The school is hosting the SWSF Easter Teachers' Conference at Rudolf Steiner House from 26th to 28th April. Some of the conference participants will need accommodation for the nights of 26th and 27th. If you are able to offer a bed, with or without breakfast, please let us know.

Your guest will pay £20 per night. Email amandabell@mac.com with subject 'conference accommodation'

Thank you very much to those of you who have already responded.

Amanda Bell

When collecting your children from school, we realise that it seems slightly ridiculous to pay for your parking when you are only going to wait for a few minutes for your child. It is however a risk if you wait outside the school gates. We have asked the children to all wait inside the gate, but it's difficult to keep an eye on all of them and sometimes the children run outside the gate to see if their parent is waiting there. We have even had cases when the children have then decided that they should wait outside of the school gates for their parents which poses all sorts of risks. Therefore we ask that parents or carers please wait inside the school gates on the school grounds to pick up their children to make the environment safe for all.

Many thanks.

The Fundraising Group

is seeking a volunteer to undertake our Trust and Foundations fundraising through researching grants income. This position requires computer literacy and internet access, research skills, an understanding of the school, ability to match criteria, and time. We can offer support and on-going training, and specific help in creating a template for initial applications. The work can take as much or as little time as you can offer, and can be done at home, and ideally, you would be able to commit to at least a year to follow through on applications. Please contact Janelle if you would like to help.

ASSOCIATION MEETING

Everyone is invited to attend our Association Meeting to be held tomorrow (Saturday 12th March) at school.

Come along to meet the Trustees, hear updates from the College, Management Team and School Support Teams.

Please arrive at 10am for tea and coffee before we begin the meeting at 10:30am.

If you are unable to attend please give your apologies to Andrea.

FREE SCHOOLS UPDATE

Last summer, we registered with the Department of Education to begin the process towards becoming a Free School. The application did not commit us to anything but will allow us to find out what it would mean, how it would work and whether or not it is the right direction for our school.

Katie and Leigha went to a meeting about this question at Ringwood Waldorf School and the mood in the movement generally seems to be one of caution. There are many people who believe it would compromise our work too much and that we should be looking for other forms of funding that leave us free to educate the children in the way we believe is right for them.

This week we have been informed that our application has been turned down, and that none of the Steiner schools that applied have been accepted to go forward. We have been told we can apply again next year if we decide to go ahead, but in the meantime, we will be looking closely at the rules, regulations and requirements as they emerge.

Amanda Bell, for the College

The Management Team meets approximately every two weeks to monitor and co-ordinate the School Support Teams. If Support Team members have items for our meetings, please put them in the box in reception or email them to Jin Yee Lim

ACCOMMODATION FOR VISITORS

Occasionally we have students, advisors, therapists or speakers, who do not live in London, come to our school. Often we need to find a place for them to stay for the night so that they can join us for our early starts. If you have a room available and are happy to have lodgers there from time to time for mostly one night at a time, and with plenty of notice, please let us know.

Education News Clippings

The Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship office sends out regular media clippings about education issues to anyone who is interested. Some of them are controversial and not all of them are complimentary about Steiner education, but we're all grown up aren't we? So if you are interested and not scared of a little criticism, email Jasmin and she will forward them to you.

Newsletter Contributions

The next newsletter will be distributed on Friday 13th May. Deadline for contributions is 6pm Wednesday 11th May.

We are always keen to publish contributions from parents in the newsletter. If you have something interesting/funny/controversial/moving/profound to share, however small, please send it to me. Email please, to Amanda.

Outstanding Fees - please pay now!

Fee invoices may be paid either:

- 1 Annually in advance by September 10th or:
- 2 Termly by the first day of each term or:
- 3 By regular monthly Standing Order commencing in September with financial commitment to be met in full not later than the following 30th June (NB *This date is a correction to the one previously published*).

Cheques should be made payable to:
The St Michael Steiner School Ltd.

Information for BACS payments:

Account name:
THE ST MICHAEL STEINER SCHOOL LTD.
Account number: 65098413
Bank: THE CO-OPERATIVE BANK
Sort code: 08-92-99

Please quote your family name as a reference so that we can identify your payment.

Would you like to see this newsletter in colour and detail?

This Newsletter - as well as back issues - is available in full colour on our website at

www.stmichaelsteiner.wandsworth.sch.uk

Community Section

Please note that the school does not endorse or recommend, either in general or in particular, anything offered in the Community Pages and parents are advised to check the qualifications of practitioners or people offering services here.

Experienced Piano Teacher

available to teach across London, currently teaching both children and adults, ex Waldorf pupil. In my lessons I always like to give a solid grounding in technique whilst at the same time giving the pupil the tools to develop their innate musicality. Beginners welcome. Contact Matthew Ratcliffe.

Cello Lessons

I would like to offer cello lessons after school either individually or in groups of two.

Please do contact me if you have a child who may be interested.

Daniel Davies

Dear parents of St. Michael Steiner School,

My name is Tabea and I'm seventeen years old . At the moment I attend the courses of the eleventh grade at the Waldorfschool in Stuttgart,Germany . I plan to graduate in 2013.

I'm looking for a host family who would like to host me for 3-4 weeks in summer . Our holidays will be from 30.7.- 9.9.2011. In return I would look after your children and help you with your house hold. I regularly do babysitting and love dealing with children and also take care of them . Last year I did an one-week-internship in a kindergarten , which I enjoyed very much .

I chose your country because I would like to improve my English , meet English people and I'm excited to collect some experience .

In my freetime I play classical music , do sport and dancing . I also love to be together with my friends and meet new people .

I'm really looking forward to hearing from you .

You can contact me per e-mail :

tabea_d.hoersch@web.de

or by mail : Tabea Hörsch , Bergstraße 56 , D-70186 Stuttgart , Germany.