



THE EDINBURGH **RUDOLF STEINER** SCHOOL





Introduction

The Edinburgh Rudolf Steiner School provides a co-educational and holistic education to pupils aged 3½ - 18 years. With places for 350 children, the school is situated in the leafy, residential suburb of Merchiston, just two miles from the city centre.

Pupils of all abilities are welcomed, accepted and valued for what they bring to the school community, whether it is an artistic talent, academic ability or social skills. Our pupils are not measured against each other but against their own potential, meaning competition is reserved for the games lesson.

Established in 1939 and set in three acres of carefully maintained grounds, ours is one of four Steiner schools in Scotland. Offering small class sizes and specialist teaching staff, our goal is to nurture and support the intellectual, social, emotional and spiritual development of all our pupils by engaging their heads, hearts and hands throughout their education. Our aim is to engage and nourish each child's innate curiosity and love of learning by offering a balance of academic, artistic and practical activities so they are prepared for the lives they have ahead of them.

Our curriculum is increasingly valued for its innovative approach. With over 1000 Steiner Waldorf schools worldwide, our experience and methods are at the forefront of educational research. We continually share best practice with state maintained institutions and are at the cutting edge of the education debate.



Choosing Steiner Education: What makes it different?

Our school offers the internationally recognised Steiner Waldorf curriculum which addresses all the multiple intelligences, including emotional literacy and kinaesthetic learning, while bringing into balance the attributes of the right and left hemispheres of the brain. This means that, in addition to developing analytical, logical and reasoning skills as education has always done, it also focuses on the development of imagination, creativity, memory and flexible thinking – the 'soft skills' that are so in demand in today's society.

The Steiner curriculum is based on an in-depth understanding of the development of human nature and how children learn at different stages in their lives.

There are significant differences between Steiner Waldorf and current UK mainstream education in terms of both content and approach. Perhaps most fundamental is that, in line with the rest of Europe, the start of **formal learning is delayed until the age of six years**. It has been consistently proved that this can be hugely beneficial to development because when they do enter the Lower School, our pupils are ready to embrace learning and quickly reach the standards attained by peers at other schools. The emphasis on helping pupils to become creative, flexible and responsible world citizens means there is also a strong international focus with all pupils learning **French and German from the age of six**.

From Kindergarten to the final year (Class 12), all subjects are linked together and taught in a wider context. This holistic approach to education enables our pupils to develop a broader understanding of the world in which we live.

The curriculum also interweaves academic, artistic and practical subjects into a coherent whole. It takes the form of a learning spiral which sees Lower School subjects picked up again and studied in a new way in the Upper School. The aim of developing imaginative, responsible and caring young people is deeply embedded in all subjects and in the way in which they are presented.

A similar approach has been adopted in the Scottish Government's 'Curriculum for Excellence' which is taught in mainstream schools across Scotland. During its introduction, the experience and knowledge of Steiner teachers was sought which demonstrates that we continue to be at the forefront of educational innovation.

Unique to Steiner schools is the programme of **Main Lessons**. These are topic blocks which are studied daily for up to two hours over four weeks. Taught from Class 1 to 12, subjects include Astronomy, Philosophy, Farming, History of Architecture, Art History, Geology, Surveying and Mechanics. This programme ensures that, irrespective of later exam choices, all pupils receive a broad and cultural knowledge that encompasses science, art, crafts and the humanities.

There is nothing arbitrary in the curriculum with each subject introduced at a time and in a way which is appropriate to the developmental stage of the children. Linking subject matter to the phases of child development inspires real motivation and a love of learning.

There is also great emphasis on learning through doing by encouraging **manual dexterity**. Studies show that the development of fine motor skills in early childhood is linked to later cognitive ability. By teaching children to knit when they are six, we are actually building their capacity for independent thought when they are sixteen. Therefore, practical work with wood, clay, textiles and other materials features at every level of the school.



Who was Rudolf Steiner?

As a young man, studying science and the humanities in Vienna, Rudolf Steiner became profoundly interested in the spiritual origins of nature and humanity. He broke new ground in many areas of cultural, social and scientific thinking and, in 1919, was invited to put his educational theories into practice by opening a school in Stuttgart, Germany for the children of the workers at the Waldorf Astoria factory. The Waldorf name is commemorated today in the term 'Steiner Waldorf Education.'

Early Years



Parents and Toddlers

Our doors are always open to current and prospective pupils and parents. A relationship with the school can start as early as pregnancy and those with young babies regularly attend our parent and toddler group. Within its own separate and cosy building, the group has up to nine sessions per week allowing parents and infants to come together to talk, play, prepare food and share experiences.

The Kindergarten (age 3 ½ to 6 years)

Our purpose-built Kindergarten building was created in 1990 and lies in the heart of the school grounds. As this is often the first step away from home, the soft and warming colours combine with the child-friendly architecture to provide a homely atmosphere where young children can flourish. Rather than a small-scale copy of the adult world, it is an environment where the deeper needs of the child to create, initiate and imagine are nurtured.

Each of the small Kindergarten groups has its own specialist teacher, a cloakroom, cooking area and entrance to a large communal garden with swings, a sandpit, lawn and climbing trees to explore. The rhythm of daily life is simple and unhurried without the notions of 'achievement,' 'success,' or 'failure.'

The morning's activities are carefully balanced. Every day begins with a short activity such as painting, cleaning or baking which leads into an hour of free play to encourage imaginative thinking. Each room offers a wide variety of natural 'unformed' toys including shells, stones, fir cones, coloured cloth and blankets which can become whatever the child wants them to be. Water-colour painting, drawing, modelling, hand-crafts, baking and other artistic activities awaken creativity, while the rich imagery of fairy tales, poetry, plays and songs nourish the child's language skills and feelings. Circle games and outdoor play increase physical strength, agility and grace while seasonal festivals foster a meaningful connection with nature.





The Kindergarten Community

Since young children learn by imitation, our Kindergarten teachers lead by example. This means our pupils discover the importance of watering the plants, tending the garden or feeding leftovers to the birds simply by observing and joining in. Each child has a daily job such as sweeping, washing the plates or taking peelings to the compost heap.

Awareness of others and of their place as individuals within the small community of each class is also fostered in a non-explicit way. Each group includes a mix of ages from 3 ½ - 6 years which means our older pupils help the younger ones, allowing them to gain a sense of their growing capabilities. Snack time is enjoyed all together round a large table which helps the group to learn social skills such as when to speak up, how to negotiate and, where necessary, how to compromise. The older children help to prepare the food which supports the development of numeracy skills as they weigh and measure the ingredients.

Kindergarten education is comprehensive and stimulating. It encourages our youngest children to be at ease with themselves and to be eager, creative and responsive when they begin their formal education in Class 1.

The Oral Tradition

Uniquely, our teachers tell stories to their pupils rather than read to them from a book – a skill which is particularly important in the Kindergarten and Lower School. In this way, eye-contact is maintained which generates an atmosphere of wonder and an emotional connection between the storyteller and the audience. The importance of actively listening helps our Kindergarten pupils to develop the habit of settling themselves physiologically and psychologically. When this happens, the imagination can truly take over so that the child learns how to create for themselves the mental pictures which accompany the story. As well as developing independent thought, it provides an aid to speech development and enhances the vocabulary.

The Lower School (age 6 to 14 years)





The Class Teacher

From the start of formal education in Class 1 to the age of 14 years (Class 8), there is one teacher who has overall responsibility and care for the class. Although specialists will teach pupils for some subjects, it is the Class Teacher who will greet them in the morning, present the Main Lesson of the day and support them as they develop throughout these important years.

The Class Teacher has a special relationship with the class and may continue in that role for several years or, whenever possible, through the entire Lower School period. In our rapidly changing world, this provides a haven of stability and continuity; an ideal environment for sustained and supportive learning. It also allows the teacher to develop a thorough understanding of the needs of each individual in the class.

When selecting a Class Teacher, we look for those with initiative, who have a deep appreciation of the needs of children, an enthusiasm for life, a willingness to work on their own development and, perhaps most importantly, a sense of humour.

It is the Class Teacher's responsibility to bring each Main Lesson to the pupils in a vivid, pictorial way so that their imaginations are touched and their enthusiasm is fired. All key subjects are taught in this way while new subjects are introduced at a time appropriate to the child's developmental stages.

In Class 5, for example, the main lesson on 'Ancient Greece' might appear to be an extended history lesson. However, the theme also provides the teacher with opportunities for linguistic study, writing, reading, drawing, architectural discussion, music, maths and moral guidance. Most of the content is sourced by the teacher which both empowers them as a professional and inspires the pupils.

School trips also take place to expand and reinforce themes taught in the Main Lesson. For example, a visit to the Michael Hall School in Sussex brings together a large number of Steiner schools from across the UK for the "Steiner Olympics" – a three day Greek extravaganza.

Making the Transition to Upper School

Class 8 is the final year in the Lower School and, as pupils reach the age of 14, it acts as a year of transition in their school careers.

While the Class Teacher is still responsible for the welfare of the class, Upper School teachers begin to take some subject lessons and, occasionally, the Main Lesson. This eases the passage of our pupils through to the next stage of their education and introduces them to the new challenges and opportunities they will shortly experience.

Throughout this defining year, our pupils work on a major project of their own choosing. This is entirely self-directed work and the results are extremely impressive. Examples have ranged from a full scale handcrafted harp and a beautifully stitched replica dress from 1900, to a refitted campervan and an animated cartoon. The projects are put on public display in the School Hall and pupils give an oral presentation about their work.

Towards the end of the year, Class 8 also performs a play, often by Shakespeare. The whole class gets involved from painting the scenery, making the costumes and performing the music to designing the posters, lighting the performance and, of course, acting on stage. This provides a profound learning experience for all the pupils.

Throughout the Lower School, Modern Languages form a key part of the curriculum. This culminates in the Class 8 Exchange when up to six weeks are spent visiting a Steiner school in a German or French speaking country. They adopt the timetable of their host class and enjoy many subject lessons in the foreign language. They also go on a programme of excursions and visits combined with outward bound activities. Our pupils always rise to the challenge and grow in self confidence, often forming lasting connections with their host families. This is also a factor in the excellent results achieved by Steiner pupils in Modern Language exams.



The Upper School (age 14 to 18 years)



your EXAMS

General	Conduct
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ arrive in good time to allow yourself to settle before the exam starts.✓ check you have been given the correct paper.✓ answer all your answers in the time of the exam.✓ read the instructions and time carefully to give yourself time to think through the questions.✓ give the right answer, not just the first one.✓ complete the answer sheet with your name and ID number.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✗ do not talk or give the answer after the start.✗ do not use a dictionary or calculator unless you are told to do so.✗ do not use a bag or PDA (Personal Digital Assistant) in the examination room. Mobile phones must not be taken into the examination room.



From Physiology and Philosophy to Trigonometry and Geology, the broad spectrum covered in the daily Main Lesson encourages a holistic understanding of the world and of the ideas and concepts which have shaped our history.

The curriculum of the Upper School evolves to accommodate each pupil's emerging capacity for analytical thought. All subjects are taught by specialists who expect their pupils to exhibit an increasing degree of independent thinking, original discussion and mature expression. Throughout their four years in the Upper School, pupils are actively encouraged to exercise independent judgement, be it aesthetic, moral or intellectual.

One of the unique aspects of the Steiner curriculum is its breadth. During the final four years of school, at a time when most young people are becoming specialised as a result of their exam choices, Steiner pupils continue to study a broad spectrum of arts, sciences, crafts and humanities in addition to their examined subjects.

Guardians and Tutors

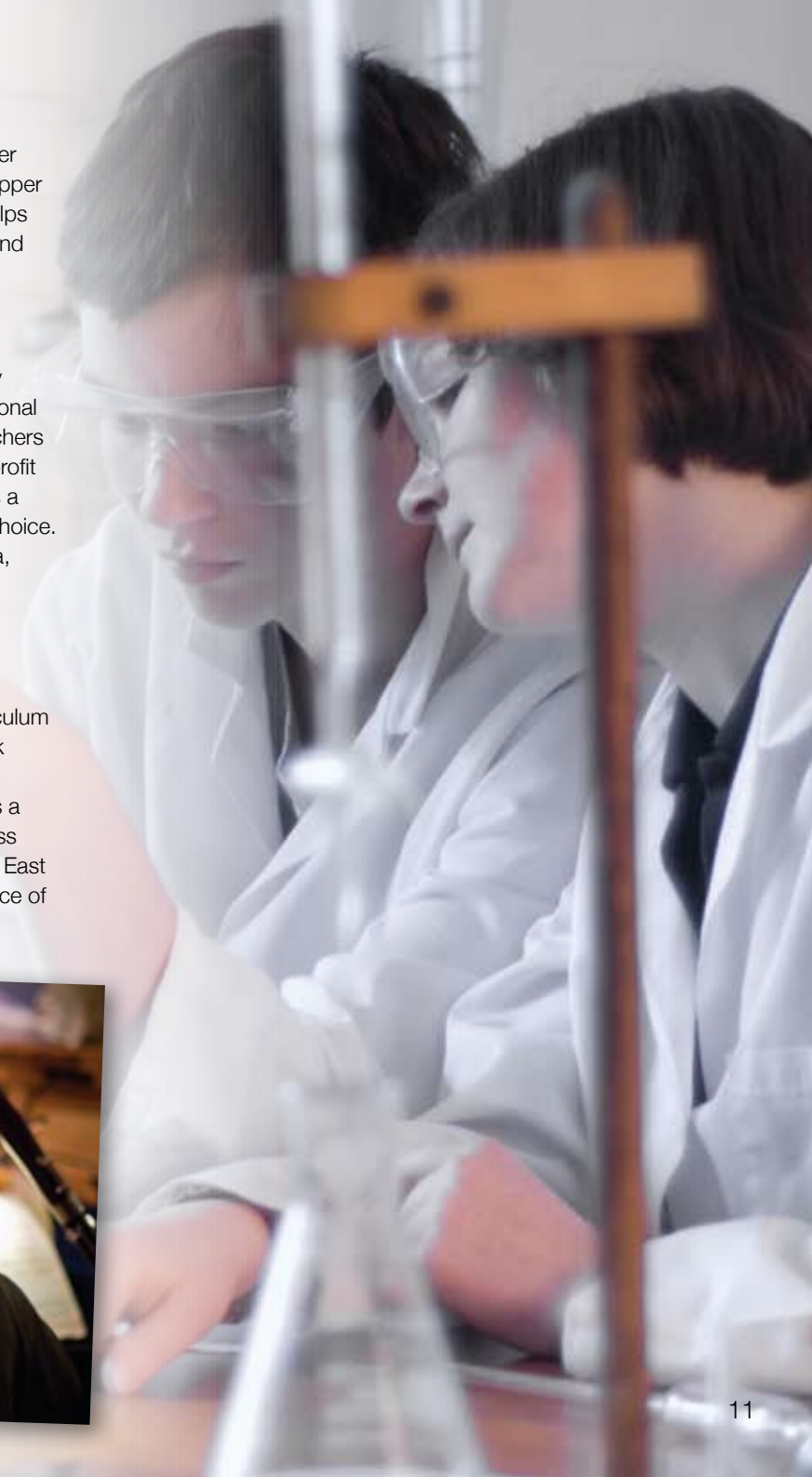
Each pupil in Class 9 is assigned a tutor with whom they meet once a week to help with their transition into the Upper School and to discuss any issues they may have.

Each class is also assigned a 'Guardian' who looks after their overall well-being for the four year period of the Upper School. This teacher arranges excursions and trips, helps the class to organise their many fundraising activities and acts as a mentor and confidant.

Throughout their final year, Class 12 has the unique opportunity to run the school canteen as their own business. With the support of the Class Guardian, they learn teamwork, budgeting, management and promotional skills while producing healthy meals for pupils and teachers throughout the school. If the class makes a sufficient profit at the end of the school year, the money goes towards a cultural trip with their teacher to a destination of their choice. In recent years, pupils have travelled to Estonia, Russia, Greece and Poland.

Outside the School Gates

School trips form a key part of the Upper School curriculum including a range of residential trips. In Class 9, a week is spent working at Garvald Farm near West Linton. To support a Main Lesson on Surveying, Class 11 spends a week on Arran while our final year pupils join other Class 12s from across the UK at the Emerson Conference in East Sussex. They review, share and reflect on the experience of their education while looking to the future.





Examinations

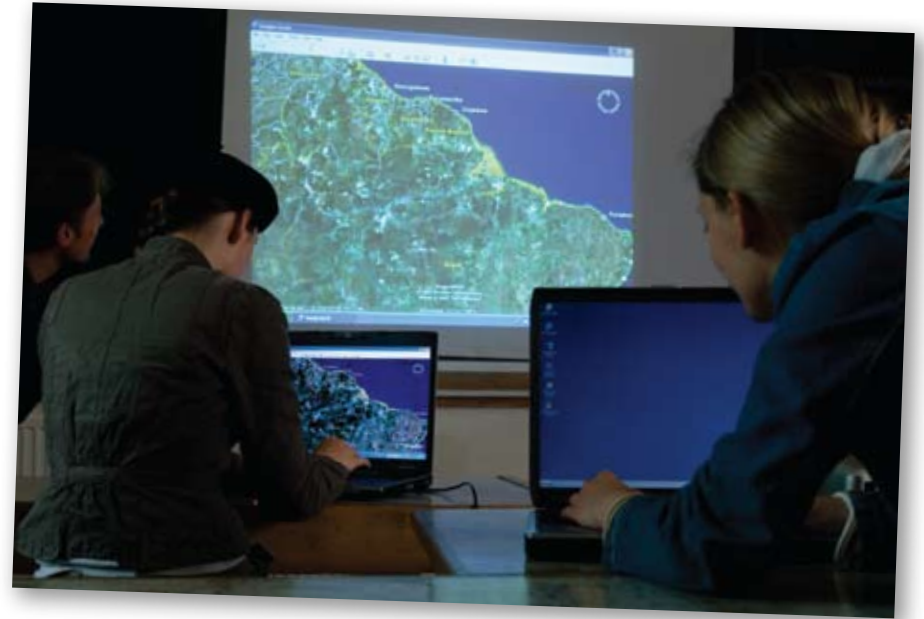
Although competitive exams are not part of the internal assessment of the school, each child is encouraged to achieve their full potential by taking a combination of nationally recognised exams in Class 10, 11 and 12. A mixture of English GCSEs, Standard Grades, Intermediates, AS levels and Highers is offered.

This mix has been chosen to fit most effectively with the Steiner curriculum and allow the most latitude for study. To allow the broad curriculum of Main Lessons to continue, exams are taken a year later than in mainstream schools. We are proud that our pupils consistently achieve results well above the national average, yet we don't select pupils on academic grounds like most independent Scottish schools.

Careers Education and Guidance

Structured careers education is provided within the Main Lesson programme. In Class 9, pupils are introduced to the world of work and are taught how to construct their C.V.s. Class 10 receives lessons on exam choice as well as individual interviews to explore decisions in more detail. This age group also participates in two weeks of Work Experience. Class 11 and Class 12 pupils take part in a series of interviews with ISCO, the independent schools careers service which provides careers education and guidance for young people.

Outside the classroom, pupils have the opportunity to visit Careers and Higher Education Conventions, Gap Fairs and University Open Days as well as taking part in Career Experience Courses.



Life After School

The career paths followed are as individual as our curriculum. Ninety per cent of our pupils continue on to higher education with many opting to take a gap year to participate in charity and community work before continuing their studies or entering the world of work. Our former pupils have gone on to excel in a wide range of careers from doctors, lawyers and business professionals to artists, academics and entrepreneurs.

After our pupils complete their school journey, they rarely lose their connection with the school, opting to return regularly for events and celebrations.

Beyond the Classroom

Creating International Citizens

The Edinburgh Rudolf Steiner School welcomes children from all social, religious and ethnic backgrounds and a multicultural community is encouraged through an active exchange programme.

Each year a number of pupils from abroad attend our Upper School for up to a year or more. They are allocated boarding places with families closely connected with the school and are quickly absorbed to become active members of the school community. This helps all our pupils to develop a wider understanding of the world in which they live. In the same way, our pupils have the opportunity to attend Steiner schools worldwide to broaden their horizons and improve their foreign language skills.

Physical Education

Team games and PE take place throughout the school with most classes enjoying at least two timetabled lessons per week. After school clubs and organised lunch time activities also take place in the School Hall to cater for all interests and abilities. Our school teams compete against other schools in various sporting activities and are heartily supported by the school community.

Music

Music has always been integral to the Steiner curriculum and its ability to raise academic standards is now becoming increasingly documented. Singing forms a key element of each Main Lesson as pupils learn songs related to the topics they are studying or that reflect the season. They progress from singing in unison to four part rounds and harmonies. Singing is also essential to modern language classes.

Pupils in the Lower School make and play their own pipes out of bamboo before progressing on to the recorder. Class orchestras are formed and, where possible, timetabled as part of the curriculum. We also have a successful school orchestra which provides the accompaniment for the many school productions while the junior and senior choirs regularly perform.

Gardening

Gardening is another unique aspect of our curriculum which helps our pupils learn how their work has a direct and a visible impact on their environment. Gardening lessons begin in Class 5. Pupils tend their own plots and choose what to plant. They can sell their own organic vegetables to raise class funds or make soup and salads for their class.

Drama

Drama is a medium that can empower children on an individual level as well as encourage greater social cohesion as a class. From Kindergarten to Class 12, all pupils work on and perform pieces that range from fairy stories and myths to Oscar Wilde and Shakespeare. Performances take place in a range of modern languages including English, French and German to further develop language skills.

The dramatic arts are well supported in the Upper School and, each year, Class 12 enjoys putting on a play as their leaving gift to the school. Our strong community spirit is demonstrated by our regular public concerts and plays which involve pupils of all ages who perform alongside their parents and teachers.





Eurythmy

Eurythmy is an art of movement unique to Steiner schools. It seeks to express the sounds of speech and music, while awakening artistic sensitivity and good coordination within each individual. It also promotes social awareness within the group. As well as being practised throughout the school, eurythmy is used curatively as a therapy and is performed as a stage art.

Religious Education

Religion in the Edinburgh Rudolf Steiner School is non-denominational and broadly Christian in its essence, although individual lessons draw content from a wide variety of cultures and faiths. In the Lower School, the weekly lessons on religion underpin the rest of the curriculum, strengthening the sense of reverence for the divine in nature and the spiritual in humanity. In the Upper School, a formal study of world religions takes place.

Learning Support

Our school offers a small team of qualified and experienced teachers who provide both individual and group support. Children with a wide range of abilities may need extra help during their school career. This support is carefully devised to suit the needs of each individual and is agreed with the Class Teacher, Guardian and parents. On occasion, the advice of the school doctor may be sought. Where appropriate, support may include therapeutic movement exercise or artistic work as well as subject coaching.

Extra Curricular Activities

Our school offers a wide range of after school clubs designed to meet the varying interests of our pupils. Many opt to take part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme and are supported by the staff in a wide range of fundraising activities for both school specific charities and those close to their own hearts. Many sports are offered including hockey, basketball and table tennis. The school has an excellent female football team and even offers circus skills as a fun, physical hobby.

Admissions Policy

The School operates an “all year” admissions policy allowing pupils to start at any point in the academic session. We are experienced in helping pupils to settle into their new environment quickly which is particularly useful for those who are relocating or have found that their current school no longer meets their requirements.

Open Tours run one Friday each month throughout the school year and the school’s website provides further information (www.steinerweb.org.uk).



School Ethos

The Edinburgh Rudolf Steiner School was founded on qualities of care, attention and respect which are central to the school community today.

All Steiner schools strive to embody this ethos. They are non-hierarchical, with major decisions being taken by the College of Teachers, a group of experienced teachers who meet once a week in the evening to discuss the running of the school. A management group (which is part of the College of Teachers) ensures that decisions are properly implemented. Because every teacher has contributed to the decision-making process, they are committed to upholding the outcomes. This presents a strong example of a close-knit working community to our pupils.

Relationships between teachers, pupils and parents are positive and caring within a strong community in which each family and child can find a place. As a result, many children who have been bullied or have not flourished at other schools settle easily into this supportive environment.

The School Community

As often as possible, we come together as a whole school community to celebrate key seasonal festivals including Michaelmas, Advent, Easter and St. John's (Midsummer). Parents are given a warm welcome on these joyful occasions when plays, eurythmy, music and poetry are performed by their children.



Class 12 cultural trip to Greece



For more information or to arrange a tour of the school, please contact the admissions secretary:

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Tel: 0131 337 3410

Email: admissions@steinerweb.org.uk

www.steinerweb.org.uk

