Forest School July 2015

Rudolf Steiner (1861 – 1925)

Orla, Margaret and Hannah
Rudolf Steiner

Was an Austrian philosopher, social reformer, architect, artist and scientist. He founded the first Steiner school in Stuttgart, Germany in 1919 after a request from the owner of the Waldorf-Astoria cigarette factory to open a school for the workers' children.
Key Features of Steiner Education

Steiner schools are always co-educational, take pupils from 3-18 years.

They welcome children of all abilities from all faiths and backgrounds.

In the 80 years since it was developed Steiner education has become the largest independent educational movement worldwide.

The priority of the Steiner ethos is to provide an unhurried and creative learning environment where children can find the joy in learning and experience the richness of childhood rather than early specialisation or academic hot-housing.
Aim of Steiner education

- The aim of Steiner Waldorf education is to inspire in each student a lifelong love of learning and to enable them to fully develop their unique capacities.
Key Features of Steiner Education

- The linking of subject material and the integration of curriculum areas
- The centrality of the relationship between the child and teacher in learning
Key Features of Steiner Education

The quality of the relationship that the teacher establishes with the child is of central importance in the learning process.

Nurturing the child's sense of wonder and natural curiosity:
Key Features of Steiner Education

The child as an active agent in his or her learning.

Emphasis on the role of the parents as primary educators and the special relationship this builds with the parents and the school.
Steiner education

- It gives equal attention to the physical, emotional, intellectual, cultural and spiritual needs of each pupil and is designed to work in harmony with the different phases of the child’s development.
Steiner education

- There is a strong emphasis on independent thinking, self-confidence, resourcefulness and creativity, along with small class sizes, a very positive peer group and inspiring teachers.
Rudolf Steiner (1861 – 1925)

“Our highest endeavour must be to develop free human beings who are able of themselves to impart purpose and direction to their lives. The need for imagination, a sense of truth, and a feeling of responsibility – these three forces are the very nerve of education”
Steiner Ethos in Forest Schools

Steiner Ethos can be found very often in Forest Schooling.
Research undertaken by the UK Forestry Commission showed the impact of Forest Schooling on children, illustrating the similarities with Steiner Education.

http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/SERG_Forest_School_research_summary.pdf/
Love of Learning

To nurture a child’s love of learning is the main priority of Steiner education.

**Confidence** – In forest schools children develop confidence in themselves by having the freedom, time and space to learn and demonstrate independence.

**Motivation and concentration** – the woodland tends to fascinate children and they develop a keenness to participate and the ability to concentrate over longer periods of time.
Education is the sparking of a flame, not the filling of a vessel.

-Socrates
Knowledge & understanding

Forest schooling naturally encourages the children to develop an interest in the natural surroundings and respect for their environment. This is key to how Steiner wanted to develop the link between children, their spirituality and the natural world.
Physical Skills

Steiner encouraged self-led play in an environment that enables risk-taking and opportunities to develop perseverance. The Forestry Commission research showed that the improvement in children’s physical skills were characterised by the development of physical stamina and gross and fine motor skills.
Social Skills

One of Steiner’s key features to have smaller ‘classrooms’, is also a feature in Forest schools allowing children to interact more closely with their peers, teachers and parents, giving them confidence in their curiosity and teaching them empathy. This was noted in the research.

- Children gain increased awareness of the consequences of their actions on peers through team activities such as sharing tools and participating in play.

- Language development is prompted by the children’s sensory experiences.
WHO KNOWS WHAT HAPPENS WHEN SCHOOL FUNDING DOESN'T KEEP PACE WITH ENROLMENT?...ANYONE?
Educating the world

In Steiner’s “highest endeavour to develop free human beings who could impart purpose and direction” the research showed that:

- The Forest School give teachers a new understanding of the children they teach as they observe them in a different setting.
- Children take their experiences home and talk about them to friends and family, which sometimes lead to families visiting woodlands more frequently.

These knock on affects have a major impact on “the need for imagination, a sense of truth, and a feeling of responsibility – these three forces are the very nerve of education”
Relationships

- Forest school provides a natural space for children and teachers using the Steiner ethos to develop a significant relationship through authentic experiences within the surroundings of the forest.
- Facilitating learning at the child's pace, quality of interactions between adult and child due to lower ratios necessitated in the forest.
Establishing habits for a lifetime

- Building lifelong love of learning - through the application of Rudolf Steiner's ethos within a forest school setting we are equally developing a life long love of nature and of the environment.
Imagination, Truth & Responsibility in the Forest

- Imagination - The natural environment – perfect canvas for imaginative play and learning, role play, and creation
- Truth - An absence of ‘stuff’, authentic experiences, witnessing nature, cycle of life and death, regrowth through the seasons
- Responsibility – Stewardship of the forest, ‘leave no trace’, managing the land
Child as capable and active learner

- Developing in a holistic way
- Construct their own knowledge through use of the senses, tactile experiences,
- Kinaesthetic input – whole body learning
Thank You for listening! 😊