

**Child development and leitmotif for this class**

One of the main characteristics of children between the seventh and ninth year [age 6-8] is their desire to learn, without any need to form their own judgements. Memory, imagination, enjoyment of rhythmical repetition and a desire for universal concepts presented in pictorial form, come to the fore at this stage. Children retain a bias towards accepting the authority of the adult world, but this is not now a matter of imitation but of concentrating attention upon major role models; these affect the child largely through the feeling of their words or moral strength of their actions. A child's inner question to the teacher is: 'Can you see who I really am?' and 'Can you help me encounter the world?'. This determines the teacher's position and relationship in regard to the child. These basic questions are answered in and through the lessons which aim not only to teach about experiencing the world but also to let the children actually experience the world. The teacher who succeeds in meeting these expectations set by the children will be accepted by them as an authority, something very different to attempting to control children as an authoritarian (adapted from Avison and Rawson, 2014) Children in Class 1 are making the transition from Early Childhood education, with its focus on learning through imitation, practical activities and child-led play, into formal schooling, where there is more need to listen, wait, follow and participate. They learn to become part of a new learning community, building on the learning habits, dispositions and attitudes that have been fostered in kindergarten, and learning new classroom routines and behaviours. Children are ready and eager to take on the challenge of this new phase of their learning, keen to get started on the exciting adventures of literacy and numeracy. Teachers are ready to meet the children, however ready they are, and seek to integrate them into the learning community.

Stories are embodied and the imagination begins to map out interior spaces in a free, dreamy way as a balance to the need to focus on the structuring of numbers, letters, forms, rules. As children gain greater control of their limbs, feet and fingers, they also expand the internal spaces of the imagination, learning to focus their mental imaging. The gesture of Class 1 is one of opening the book of learning and beginning the process of 'reading', in the sense of the Old English word, *rædan* - 'riddling'. Riddling conjures up working pictures of exploring, playing with, engendering curiosity and kindling interest. And the literacies that begin to develop are multi-disciplinary: not just English literacy, but mathematical, social, physical and artistic.

**Narrative Themes**

Folktales, tales of wonder and magic, nature tales.

**Folktales, tales of wonder and transformation, tales of magic**, sometimes called fairy tales, are characterized by the appearance of archetypes, or frequently recurring motifs that have specific narrative functions (e.g. the offer of magic help) and often appear in a specific order (e.g. like three trials) they are impervious to material facts and have their own internal logic and often reflect the cultures in which they were recorded. There are suggestions that many folktale motifs go back to a common proto-European language, but equally they can be the products of contemporary literature. Many such folk tales have a common narrative structure (preparation, complication, transference, struggle, return, recognition), similar to the structures found in myths.

### **Musical Themes**

Qualities:

- Still pentatonic, fairly high in range, no strong pull to a key note.
- Fairly free in rhythm (unless skipping to the song).
- Constant repetition, and slight variations.

Topics: Songs to accompany activities, counting rhymes, seasonal and nature, fairy tales

### **Artistic Themes**

Simple representation of people and animals in side profile, lack of perspective and proportion.

Painting colour stories and moods.

Materials: wax sticks and blocks, thick (Lyra) pencils, coloured chalks, watercolour paints (warm and cool primary colours), beeswax/organic plasticine/clay

### **Physical Themes**

How to be in the body in ways that free up the mind to engage with new complexities and Abstractions, body geography, throwing and catching, skipping, string games, coordinating hands and eyes