



Multi-Denominational Steiner School

Ennistymon, Co. Clare

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Mol an Óige Primary School has been running in Ennistymon since September 2005. Formed by a group of local parents and teachers keen to educate their children using the Steiner Waldorf method, the school aims to cover the primary school curriculum in a creative yet practical way.

We are currently situated beside the childcare centre at Data Display, Ennistymon. Two full-time and two part-time class teachers are employed as well as a full-time classroom assistant and three individual subject teachers. There are currently 40 pupils attending the school. The school has begun the application process for Department of Education funding for September 2007.

Steiner Waldorf Education

Steiner Waldorf Education stresses a qualitative approach, based on the understanding that the child thinks, feels and acts on the basis of their developing capacities. In order to educate the whole child we must provide a balanced approach that addresses the active and emotional aspects of the child as well as the cognitive. Indeed it is increasingly recognised that cognitive abilities, i.e. the ability to think, are supported by a broadly based education. The task of the teacher is to integrate the practical, artistic and academic subject matters and to present them in a way that meets the developing needs of the child.

Each school day has a strong rhythm. Singing and movement begin the Main Lesson, taught by their class teacher, which lasts approximately two hours and includes the full range of artistic and academic activities. This lesson is designed to make best use of the early part of the day when children are most receptive. One theme will be studied in the Main Lesson for 4 weeks or so to enable the class to penetrate the subject matter deeply. The aim is to provide an experience for the child that will be meaningful and not consist only of information.

Textbooks are used sparingly and instead it is the teacher's task to bring the subject matter to life in an artistic and imaginative way. Children make their own textbooks which record and express their understanding of the subject matter. These they take great pride in. As the children move through the school with their class teacher, so their work develops and takes on an increasingly academic character while retaining its artistic content.

The Primary School Curriculum

The general aims of primary education according to the Department of Education's revised Primary School Curriculum are:

- *To enable the child to live a full life as a child and to realise his or her potential as a unique individual,*
- *To enable the child to develop as a social being through living and co-operating with others and so contribute to the good of society,*
- *To prepare the child for further education and lifelong learning...".*

At Mol an Óige School all subjects on the primary school curriculum are taught: Maths; English; Irish; History; Geography; Science; Social, Personal and Health Education (S.P.H.E.); Handcrafts; P.E.; Art and Drama.

Additional subjects are also included:
French; Woodwork; Eurythmy; Gardening; Cookery.

Mathematics

Mathematics is taught in a very concrete and practical way in the school. Through stepping, clapping, skipping and using beanbags, for example, the children experience the rhythm and patterns of numbers with their whole bodies. From this comes their maths tables. From the child's own experience and from nature and stories come the qualities of numbers. Mathematical concepts arise from the children's activities, whether it be putting toys away in junior infants (sorting) or building a swing in fourth class (measurement).

English

Oral language, reading and writing are all inextricably linked in any language. In Junior Infants the priority is given to oral work by providing a rich experience of stories, rhymes, songs, drama and conversation. Building on this strong foundation in senior infants, writing is introduced through fairy tales and other stories. Reading begins with the children reading their own teacher-led texts and develops through the years until they become independent readers of a rich and wide selection of books. At the same time, equal priority is given to oral and writing skills so they can also express themselves in many different ways and situations.

Other Languages

Irish and French are taught in the school, in the early years via songs and games and developed further in the upper classes. The new Irish curriculum puts emphasis on the use of Irish as a living language and this is how it is used in this school. As well as the Irish class itself, there is widespread use of the language in everyday activities in the classroom eg: in practical subjects such as P.E. and art and crafts.

Is ar chumarsáid agus ar usáid na teanga mar ghnáth-theanga bheo a leagtar béim sa churacalam nua Gaeilge, agus is mar sin atá sé sa scoil seo freisin. Chomh maith leis an rang Ghaeilge ta béim ar usáid forleathan na teangan chun gnáth imeachtaí an lae a chur in iúl. Cruthaíonn an muinteoir suiómh sa scoil ina bhfuil gá ag an bpáiste le cumarsáid a dhéanamh trí Gaeilge go pleisiúrtha agus go feidhmiuil. Múintear ábhair praicticiúla ar nós corp oideachas agus ealaín trí mheán na Gaeilge.

Art and Drama

Artistic classes are an integral aspect of this interdisciplinary approach and include choral and instrumental music, eurythmy, drama, painting and sculpture.

Eurythmy

Eurythmy is a dance-like art form in which music or speech are expressed in bodily movement; specific movements correspond to particular notes or sounds. It has also been called "visible speech" or "visible song". Eurythmy is part of the curriculum at all Steiner Waldorf Schools. Children respond to its simple rhythms and exercises which offer physical strength and overall well being. Eurythmy enhances coordination and strengthens the ability to listen. When children experience themselves like an orchestra and have to keep a clear relationship in space with each other, a social strengthening also results.

Practical Life Skills

A comprehensive balance of practical skills is provided for the school age student. Gardening, handcrafts, cooking and woodwork are not only taught as individual subjects but also used in a cross-curricular manner to enhance other subject areas.

Multi-Denominational

The multi-denominational approach encompasses an insight into world religions and celebrations of their major festivals. All children are introduced to different religions from around the world, usually through festivals and stories. Any parent who wishes to prepare their child for a particular Sacrament will be supported by the school. However, the responsibility for preparation of a child for any Sacrament will be with the parents.

Funding

We fully intend this school to be non fee-paying and are working towards securing recognition and funding from the Department of Education for September 2007. At present, however, pending Department of Education recognition, we are obliged to charge a small fee.

The fees per week are:

Euro 35 for one child

Euro 45 for two siblings

Euro 50 for three or more siblings

This covers the cost of all books, copies, pencils, pens, crayons, all art and craft material, photocopying, French, eurythmy and all woodwork and gardening materials. Parents incur no extra cost except for outside trips, eg. theatre and school tours.

Enrolling Now for 2007 and Beyond

We are now taking enrollments for 2007 and future years for our projection figures. These figures are necessary for our application for Department funding and to allow us to plan effectively for the future development of the school. Call Una on 087 7408130 for further information.

We shouldn't ask: what does a person need to know or be able to do in order to fit into the existing social order? Instead we should ask: what lives in each human being and what can be developed in him or her?

- Rudolf Steiner

Oideachas Nadúrtha don Phaiste



**Glaine in ar gcroi
Neart in ar ngeag
Agus beart de reir ar mbriathar**

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