



School Handbook and agreement

How families & staff work in partnership to support children's learning and wellbeing

www.thelondonacornschoo.co.uk



Welcome from our Head Teacher	Page 2
Our School Ethos	Page 3
History of The London Acorn School	Page 6
How The London Acorn School is Governed	Page 8
Meet the Faculty	Page 11
Curriculum	Page 12
Assessment	Page 17
Special Educational Needs and Difficulties	Page 19
Acorn Adventurers (1-3)	Page 20
Kindergarten (3.5-6)	Page 21
Lower School (6-11)	Page 24
Technology	Page 27
Behaviour	Page 28
Festivals	Page 30
Morden Hall Park	Page 32
Policies and Procedures	Page 33
School/Family Agreement	Page 34
Contact Details	Page 36

Welcome from our Head Teacher

Welcome to The London Acorn School - a truly unique school with a clear vision to provide a creative, academic and holistic education for all our pupils. We offer an exciting and stimulating place to be which most importantly results in happy, curious, well balanced and motivated children ready to engage and contribute to our ever changing world. Our community is a multicultural and inclusive environment where children of all abilities can flourish.

We pride ourselves on the diversity of our curriculum design and the inherent creativity within it. Academic lessons challenge our pupils and our creative curriculum offers all children the opportunity to explore their imagination and achieve creatively. Our children thrive in all areas of the curriculum and simply love coming into school.

The partnerships we share between home and school are extremely strong. Education at The London Acorn School is a team effort, our ability to work closely together as a community determines the success of our pupil's education, and parents play a vital part in supporting their child on that journey. By supporting the philosophy underpinning the school, we partner each other to ensure the best possible experience for your child(ren) as they grow to meet their full potential.

Our school is an exciting place to be a part of with many opportunities for you to be involved.

We look forward to welcoming you!



Deborah Speakman
Head Teacher

Our School Ethos

“The fact is that given the challenges we face, education doesn’t need to be reformed – it needs to be transformed. The key to this transformation is not to standardize education, but to personalize it, to build achievement on discovering the individual talents of each child, to put students in an environment where they want to learn and where they can naturally discover their true passions.” **Ken Robinson**



The London Acorn School is a committed and vibrant community of pupils, staff, parents and carers united by a set of ten shared beliefs.

1. We believe the most valuable gift we can give our children is an innate curiosity and love of learning

In an ever changing world, the only certainty is uncertainty; the skills we learn today may be obsolete tomorrow. Our focus is equipping children to thrive whatever happens by imbuing them with the skills, resilience and desire to learn throughout their lives.

2. We believe that an over-reliance on technology is detrimental to children

Our increasing addiction to smartphones and other devices limits the downtime that the brain needs to process, wander and dream and is particularly detrimental to the development of young minds. While we introduce technology later on, in the early years we are very careful about exposing our children to screens.

3. We believe in the nourishing power of nature

Just as technology can be detrimental, so nature is beneficial, providing children with the space for their bodies and their imaginations to run wild. For this reason, we based our school in London's most eco-diverse park and ensure that all pupils spend time every day in nature.

4. We believe that children learn best in an intimate, un-hurried environment

Numerous studies have shown that the large class sizes and exam pressure heaped upon children from an early age is counterproductive, leaving them anxious and turning them off learning. So, we create a gentle environment where children in small classes learn at a pace in keeping with their developmental needs.

5. We believe that children thrive when they have clear boundaries

Being gentle does not mean being lax. A secure and ordered environment with consistent daily rhythms is essential to learning. We uphold the highest standards when it comes to behaviour.

6. We believe in academic excellence

We have high academic expectations for our children; indeed many educationalists have concluded that a gentler approach to education in the early years can be conducive to academic achievement later on.

7. We believe in educating the whole child

Though important, academics are not the 'be all and end all'. Supporting children's emotional, physical, creative, technical and spiritual development is as important as fostering academic accomplishment. We take a holistic approach, equipping children for life, not just for exams.

8. We believe in drawing from a variety of educational approaches

Rather than limiting ourselves to a single philosophy or approach, we stand on the shoulders of educational giants. Our curriculum is primarily shaped by the Steiner Waldorf and Acorn philosophies, blended thoughtfully with elements of other approaches that align with our values including forest school, traditional cultures, Scandinavian and mainstream education.

9. We believe that we are at our best when we are open-minded and open-hearted

Situated in a truly global city and fortunate to count people from a wide variety of ethnicities and backgrounds as part of our community, we recognise the tremendous value that people with different experiences and perspectives can provide our community and embrace them.

10. We believe that we are stronger together

Our greatest asset is our community. Together we are charting our own course, creating a school for the future with every decision we take, dictated by the best interests of our children. We welcome others who share the passion to rethink what a school can be to join us.

What this means at Home

- All parents sign a school agreement confirming that they are in accord with these ideas, and that they have given them full consideration.
- Parents also agree to tell us if they experience practice which does not align with these 10 points or if they have ideas for how it could align better, using the proper channels detailed below.

What this means at School

- All school governing groups, staff faculty members and volunteers work with these 10 points in mind and they are charged to do their best to ensure that everything they do is aligned with our school ethos.
- The school works with this as an ongoing process.

Background information for this topic: Proactive and positive ideas about how we can align more closely to our ethos are very welcome and should be forwarded to the Head Teacher and/or the Chair of The School Governance Council. We undertake to give all ideas submitted in this way full consideration as we are a reflective and learning organisation. We cannot undertake to implement every suggestion as available resources and consultation results may not allow this. We reserve the right to request any parent not aligned with our ethos or choosing to address concerns outside the proper channels to withdraw their family from our community. Our school policy for raising concerns or complaints is available on our website and gives clear guidance, including timelines, on how these will be addressed in a complete and proper manner.

The History of The London Acorn School



The London Acorn School first opened its doors on 15th September 2013 with just six children.

It began with a founding group of parents exploring the prospect of setting up a new school in London with a holistic approach. Taking inspiration from progressive educational settings, such as Steiner Waldorf and Montessori, the founders wanted children's wellbeing to be prioritised and their needs met beyond academic progress. At the same time, the governance, clear standards and robust, accountable structures of mainstream settings were regarded as equally important in establishing a school.

Where was the affordable school in London that understood that childhood is not a race and which was open-minded to see that there is not 'one method' to achieve this?

A visit to the Cotswolds to see the work of Sarah and Graeme Whiting at The Acorn School in Nailsworth was a key inspiration due to the high standard of work in their holistic setting. Our school is named in tribute to this original source of inspiration. The London Acorn School has since developed its own identity, curriculum, ethos and structures.

The first teachers were founders Cathy Brick and Sarah Fanconi Thorne, joined by Eileen Riley, a wonderful Kindergarten teacher who formed the base ethos of the Kindergarten provision we have today.

In our first three years, the Lower School was primarily shaped by a blend of Steiner and mainstream approaches to robustly meet the developmental needs of all our pupils, and this work has continued since.

Our school was deemed 'Outstanding' at our first full Ofsted inspection in 2014. In December 2017 the school was inspected under the new and fuller inspection framework and achieved a 'Good' rating.

Founding and building a school from scratch is a huge endeavour, and there have been many challenges and learning points along the journey so far. Through all this, the strength of our community has been an inspiration. We are very much a community school at all levels, not only in terms of our ethos of family-school partnership, but also in terms of our governance.

Throughout our evolution the school has continued to build on the founding principles, and we are now proud to boast a varied, capable and proven faculty, coordinated by Deborah Speakman, our Head Teacher, who brings great experience as an educator and leader.

What this means at Home

- Parents understand that their children are at a unique school that offers a blended approach of different pedagogies, primarily Steiner Waldorf and mainstream education.
- Families enjoy belonging to a community where structured parent involvement and volunteering is encouraged.

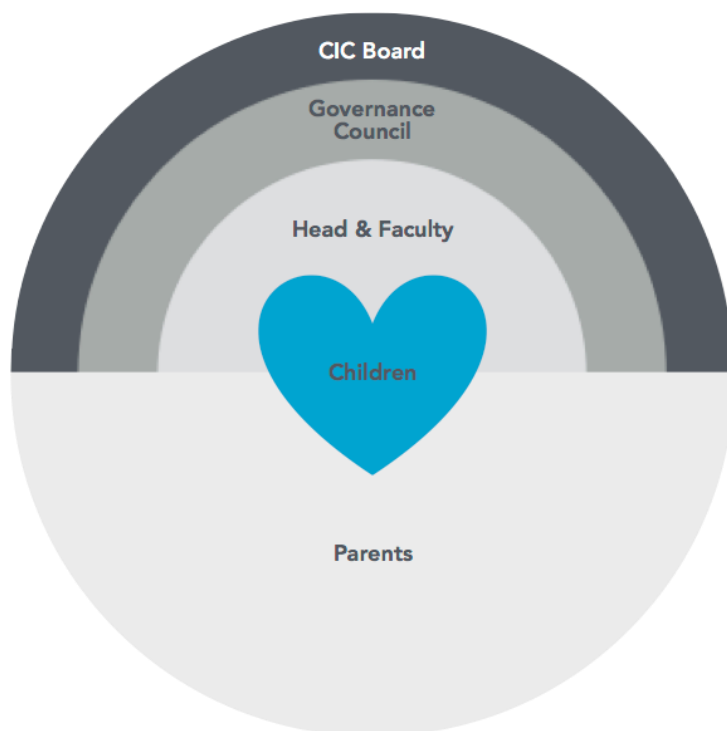
What this means at School

- A stream of clear communication on the exact nature of our blended approach flows to families through class teachers, newsletters, and regular parent evenings.
- The school undertakes to maintain structures for parental involvement and to ensure that engagement is as easy as possible.

Background information for this topic: *Ofsted inspections of The London Acorn School, 2014 and 2017*; PDFs available online. All The London Acorn School filings from 2012 are available to view at Companies House online.

How The London Acorn School is Governed

Our school is governed in consultation with the following stakeholder groups in our school, working with them in a transparent, structured and accountable way.



The Children

The children are at the centre of our community, where they enjoy the stable and constant support of the adults around them. Within this held space, they safely explore and steadily develop the skills needed to interact successfully and meaningfully with the outer world.

Parents and Carers

Encircling the children are the parents and carers, who play an essential role in furthering each child's progress in education. By supporting the faculty and upholding the school's ethos and the School Handbook partnership commitments, parents ensure a steady learning experience for their children.

A London Acorn School education is best received when a child's home and school life are compatible. We believe this can be achieved through sharing a set of values that encompasses all aspects of their life. Refer to this School Handbook including the details of your Family Agreement, and your child's class teacher for guidance on how to make the very most of a London Acorn School education with your child.

Throughout the year, there are festival days and events where children, parents and staff come together. Parents attend many of these occasions, where they fully enjoy what it means to be part of this community school.

The Faculty

Also encircling the children is a caring team of teachers and support staff. This faculty supports the children as individuals and provides excellent role models to inspire them.

By having a thorough understanding of each child's progress within the overall scope of their education, class teachers are able to advise parents on each student's development.

The faculty is coordinated and guided by our Head Teacher, Deborah Speakman, who is responsible for the smooth and cohesive running of this group and for ensuring that the faculty creates warm and effective partnerships with parents.

The Governance Council

Faculty members join parents, independent governors and a CIC board representative.

The role of the Governance Council is to provide support to the day-to-day operations of the school. Also to challenge and regularly hold those in charge of day-to-day operations to account. This body meets regularly and takes care to ensure that all aspects of school life are correctly scrutinised, from policies and procedures to student attainment, through to school finance and accounts. The Governance Council regularly consults and seeks feedback from parents and faculty members, through conversations as well as through more formal school surveys.

The CIC Board

The proprietary body of our school is a community interest company registered at Companies House called The London Acorn School CIC. Community interest companies differ from standard limited companies in that they run for community benefit and are not-for-profit legal entities. This body meets less regularly than the Governance Council and supports the school by taking a broader overview of its progress. As the school develops, the CIC board ratifies any major decisions which may impact the broad stated objects of the company and has the power to audit any area of school activity to ensure that the school is still broadly aligned with its founding principles.

What this means at Home

- Families commit to giving regular honest and constructive feedback.
- Children are sometimes asked their opinion but in a very gentle way.
- Parents may be elected to Governance Council.
- Families agree to support the decisions of governing groups.

What this means at School

- The school ensures all groups meet regularly, keep clear records of minutes and goals and publish member lists.
- Governing groups hold each other accountable and make decisions based on consultation.
- School staff agree to support the decisions of governing groups.

Background information for this topic: Governance Council meeting minutes are available on request, but the school reserves the right to redact specific information to protect confidential details of our children. Governing group members and Chair details are displayed on the school website and in the entrance hall. Governors and working group members are allocated roles according to their expertise.

Meet the Faculty

All staff at the school are deeply committed to maintaining a high level of educational excellence and ensuring children's wellbeing throughout their time at school. With a considerable wealth of experience, each class teacher is well equipped to provide students with stimulating material presented in a creative and engaging way.

All Kindergarten children are guided by their Kindergarten teacher, who works closely with a Kindergarten assistant teacher. Pupils between the ages of 6 and 11 are guided by their respective Class Teacher. Teachers often remain with classes for sequential years, ensuring continuity and stability, but this is reviewed on an annual basis and with the children's needs in mind. Any changes for the following year are communicated in the Summer Term.

Kindergarten 2021/2022				
Teachers and Session Leaders	<u>Acorn Adventurers</u> 0-3 yrs (accompanied) Karin Jashapara	<u>Rose</u> Helga Pinta Aleksandra Wojcicka-Janik	<u>Bumblebee</u> Soraya Calvo Emma Le Gendre	<u>Bluebell</u> Ya-Hsin Cheng Jessie Codner
Lower School & Support 2021/2022				
School Office Staff	<u>Headteacher</u> Deborah Speakman	<u>Business Manager</u> Emily Maskell	<u>School Office Administrator</u> Tamara Chaplin	<u>Building Manager</u> Vic Yelding
Class Teachers	<u>Class 1 & 2 Teacher</u> Anne Haendiges	<u>Class 3 & 4 Teacher</u> Luana Milroy	<u>Class 5</u> Stacey Brien	
Specialist Subject Teachers	<u>Woodland Craft</u> Karin Jashapara	<u>Woodwork Teacher</u> Martin Cooper	<u>Science Teacher</u> Charlotte Huguet	<u>French Teacher</u> Howard Rogers
Teaching Support Staff	<u>Classroom Assistant</u> Charlotte Huguet	<u>Classroom Assistant</u> Martin Cooper		

Background information for this topic: Teacher contact details are shared with class families at the beginning of each academic year, plus a brief summary of their experience and qualifications.

Curriculum



“A stimulating and effective curriculum that captures pupils imagination. Pupils are immersed in a variety of rich classroom experiences. The daily experience of connecting with the natural world strongly promotes children’s self-confidence, happiness and wellbeing.”

Ofsted, 2017

The London Acorn School offers a purposeful, academically rich and coherent curriculum which leads to a deep subject knowledge in a broad range of subjects. Primarily shaped by the Waldorf Steiner pedagogy in the early years, it is inclusive of best practice from complimentary pedagogies with a blended approach in the Lower School years. Best practice from mainstream approaches, Forest school and Waldorf Steiner are blended to create a unique and broad curriculum with an eye to National Curriculum indications and benchmarks.

Intended to promote capability for the art of living, we provide a safe and secure environment conducive to learning and creativity, encouraging students to fulfil their potential in relation to their abilities, skills and interests in accordance with their spiritual, intellectual, emotional and physical development.

Our curriculum is focused around the developmental stages of each year group and within the curriculum teachers ensure that the age, abilities and needs of students are met as far as absolutely possible. We pride ourselves in ensuring that any barrier to full learning achievement are identified and means provided to overcome them, from those requiring additional support to the more gifted and able.

The intent of The London Acorn School curriculum is to:

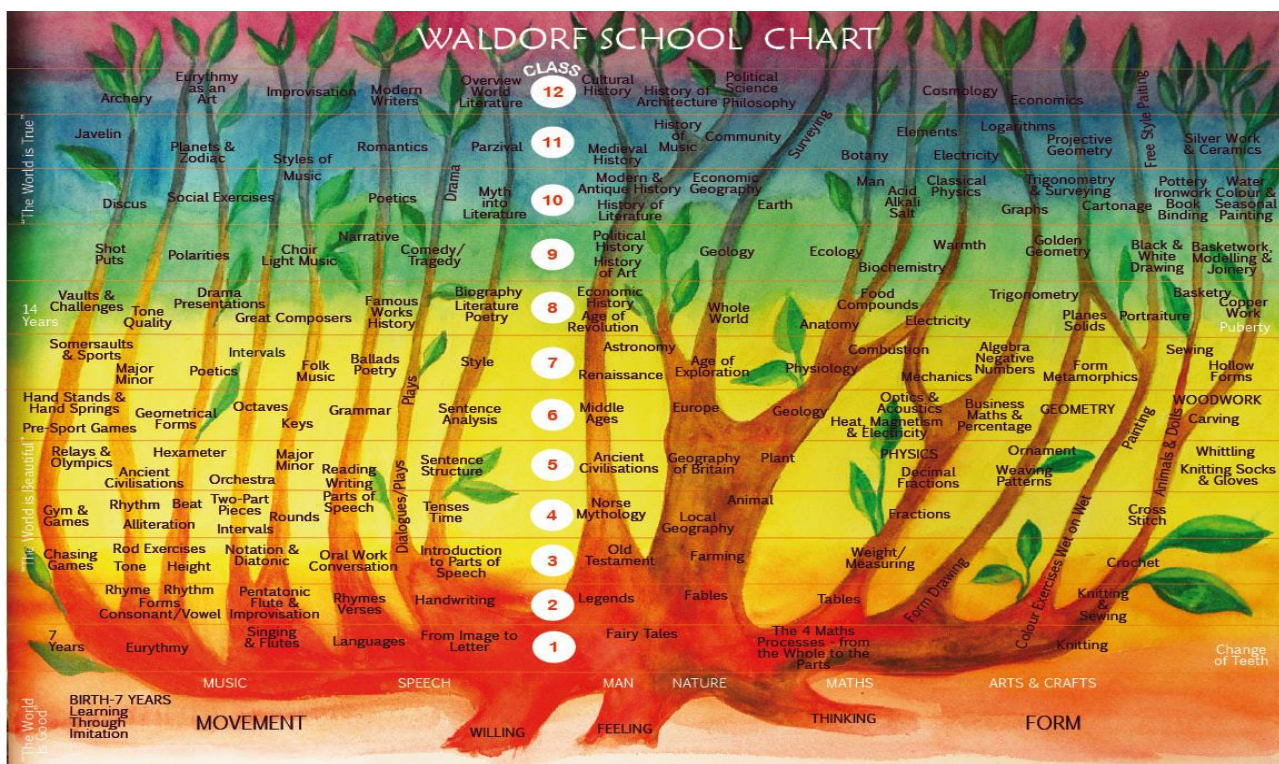
- **cultivate and preserve the child's innate sense of wonder and love of learning**
- **develop the capacity for independent imaginative thinking and creative doing**
- **offer a low-tech environment in the early years to promote the development of the finer senses and motor skills, connections in real time to people and places while gradually teaching digital skills and online safety as they progress**
- **take full advantage of the nourishing and restorative power of Nature, accessible to us in Morden Hall Park, to foster a sense of place and connection to the Earth as well as to acquire skills in Natural Science and Geography**
- **to provide an intimate, unhurried environment, where children can learn at a pace in keeping with their developmental needs**
- **provide a secure and ordered environment with clear boundaries and consistent daily rhythms which encourage full participation and engagement with teachers, peers and learning**
- **hold high academic expectations for the key skills of numeracy, literacy and the sciences in addition to cultural, musical, artistic skills (including design and technology)**
- **support the child's physical, emotional and spiritual development, equipping children for life**
- **enable pupils to develop moral sensibility with an understanding of individual liberty, mutual respect and a tolerance of those with different beliefs**
- **provide an arena where the child's individuality is accepted and respected, enabling them to become fully integrated members of the community and broader society with a clear and strong sense of their strengths and areas for development**

Curriculum Overviews

The London Acorn School Main Lesson Overview and Steiner Waldorf Curriculum

The London Acorn School – Lower School Curriculum

Term	Class 1 and 2	Humanities/ research projects Class 1/2/3	Science Class 1 and 2	Class 3 and 4	Science Class 3/4	Class 5	Humanities/ research projects Class 4/5	Science class 5
Autumn Blocks	Literacy: Saints/Legends and Fables <i>Joan of Arc/St. Michael (Michaelmas)/The Lion and the Mouse</i> Numeracy <i>Place Value: hundreds, tens, ones/column +/-, <=></i> Literacy: Saints/Legends and Fables <i>St. Martin/ St. Nicholas/ Santa Lucia (Advent)</i>	Islam Places of Worship	Everyday materials – materials matter, Everyday materials – squash, bend, squish, stretch,	Norse Mythology <i>English Humanities S/Science</i> Fractions <i>Maths</i> Human and Animal <i>English Science</i> Local Geography <i>Maths Geography Science</i> Norse Mythology <i>Literacy Humanities S/Science</i>	Animals including humans Keeping healthy Light - Light and shadows	Botany <i>Literacy Science</i> Ancient India <i>Literacy Humanities</i> Geometry Area and Volume <i>Maths</i> Ancient Persia Babylon <i>Literacy Humanities</i>	Islam Places of Worship	Forces Forces around us Sound – listen up,
Spring Blocks	Numeracy <i>Time: lunar, season, year, month, week, day, clock</i> Literacy: Saints and Fables <i>Brigid/ other culture legend/ Just So Stories and Fables</i> Numeracy <i>Geometry: position, direction, shape</i>	Great Fire Of London Local Volcanoes and Earthquakes	Rocks - Rocks and fossils, Living things and their habitats – habitats,	Data Handling <i>Maths</i> Human and Animal <i>Literacy and Science</i> Geography and Indigenous Culture <i>Humanities</i> Norse Mythology <i>English Humanities Science</i> Fractions Graphs and Geometry <i>Maths</i>	Everyday materials Materials matter Forces and magnets Amazing magnets	Scotland <i>English Humanities</i> Ancient Egypt <i>English Humanities</i> Wales <i>Literacy Humanities</i> Greek Mythology <i>English Humanities</i>	London Pilgrimages	Electricity – it's electric, Animals including humans Are these your teeth?,
Summer Blocks	Literacy: Saints and Fables <i>St. Francis, other culture legend, Just so Stories and Fables</i> Numeracy <i>Fractions</i> Literacy: Saints and Fables <i>Legends from world cultures and Just so, Jataka and Fables</i>	Map skills Morden Hall Geography	Plants – roots and shoots, Living things and their habitats - Gardens and allotments,	Human and Animal <i>Literacy and Science</i> Morden Hall History <i>Humanities</i> Norse Mythology <i>Literacy Humanities</i> Fractions Graphs and Geometry <i>Maths</i>	Sound - sound walk Plants - Artful flowers fruits and seeds,	Northern Ireland <i>English Humanities</i> Botany <i>Literacy Science</i> Gilgamesh 'Hall of Judgement <i>Literacy Humanities</i> Greek Mythology	Judaism Great Artists	Living things and their habitats Name that living thing, Living things and their habitats Help our habitats
School trips/ Speakers etc		Local Mosque Autumn term		History of Morden Hall speakers Wandle trail			Local Mosque – Autumn Term	



The National Curriculum for KS1 and KS2 English and Maths:

Please follow links to large documents

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/335186/PRIMARY_national_curriculum_-_English_220714.pdf

https://www.risingstars-uk.com/media/Rising-Stars/Assessment/PUMA/New_PUMA_Mathematics_Mastery_Curriculum_Maps_1.pdf

The London Acorn School Broader Curriculum:

Classes 1 and 2:

French	Art and craft	Music	Drama	PSHE	PE and Games	Woodwork	Forest School & gardening	Science
Understands and returns <u>greetings</u> , and recites morning verse. Listens to simple stories with understanding. Counting 0 – 30, responds <u>to questions</u> about themselves, uses phrases such as 'Quel <u>habits</u> – tu?' 'Quel <u>temps</u> fait-il?'. Matching sound to print by reading aloud. Can spell some common words with some accuracy	Paintings of: Saints Animals Colour blends Mood Beeswax modelling of animals and Saints Clay modelling Shading and blending Symmetry Craft Knitting Sewing Felting French knitting	Body rhythm Clapping/counting Singing in groups Singing in rounds Copying beats and rhythm as a class Recorder Participation in <u>Tambo</u> Bamboo Music sessions	Speaking poems from memory Speaking and acting in Drama games Contributing to recall Movement Rods dancing in lines of 3 sets Introduction to stick movements Hand clapping games Bean bags Throwing and catching Animal movements Whole Class Two play	Good to be me Healthy People About my feelings Money, Shopping and saving Keeping safe Working at Friendship Special Days About my body Exploring families Global Food	Some circle games Introduction to strategy games Games that encourage: Team work, cooperation, kindness, some risk, cohesiveness and communication skills. Games aren't competitive in nature and don't single children out. Participation in an intensive swim programme	Skip counting boards, marble <u>mazes</u> , Cam mechanisms and Bagatelle boards.	Pupils learn to recognise and identify local features, flora and fauna Pupils identify more flora and fauna and consider needs of hibernating fauna and do projects supporting them. They begin to use tools (sawing, whittling), and make basic <u>structures</u> using natural materials such as ' <u>lax</u> ' den Begin to develop empathy with non-human surroundings. Widen scientific vocabulary and work well as a class team.	Animals including humans Light and shadows Rocks and fossils Forces and magnets Plants Scientific skills

Classes 3 and 4:

French	Art and craft	Music	Drama	PSHE	PE and Games	Woodwork	Forest School & gardening	Science
<p>Greetings Listens to simple stories with understanding. Writing and reading plays a greater part, Counting 0 – 100, They learn <u>common verbs</u> in the present tense, plus more basic grammar. Pupils read short <u>sentences and</u> construct their own, with descriptions. Role play & games continue.</p>	<p>Painting related to main lesson themes Beeswax modelling of figures and people Clay modelling Chalk and pastel art Mandala Craft</p> <p>Crochet Knitting Sewing Felting</p> <p>Drawing – themes drawn from main lessons</p> <p>Using light and dark shading to creating 3D effects as well as the illusion of near and far Action drawings of people from stories Celtic Knot form drawing</p> <p>Crafts Using Geometry knowledge for practical purposes eg lanterns etc Symmetry <u>Tessellating shapes</u></p>	<p>Body rhythm Singing in rounds Copying beats and rhythm individually Recorder Timing and counts Basic music Notation</p> <p>Participation in <u>Tambo</u> Bamboo Music sessions</p>	<p>Speaking poems from memory Speaking in Drama games On the spot processing Story telling Movement characteristics</p>	<p>Mental Wellbeing Healthy Lifestyles</p> <p>Persuasion and pressure Friendships</p> <p>Local community shared responsibilities</p> <p>Aspirations and careers</p> <p>Growing and changing</p>	<p>Games played encourage: -Risk taking -Building confidence -Strategy -Teamwork -Independence -Thinking outside the box</p> <p>Games: -Triangle Tag -Witches and Apples -River Bandits -Hunters and Hounds -Shelter, <u>water</u>, food. -Mc</p> <p>Participation in an intensive swim programme</p>	<p>Wood work projects connected to Main lesson themes in addition to projects derived from pupil interests</p>	<p>Pupils identify more flora and fauna, consider needs of fauna and undertake <u>projects for</u> these. <u>Make large 'lavvu'</u> den, use tools with more confidence, make simple knots. Widen scientific vocabulary and work well as a class team.</p>	<p>Forces Sound Electricity Animals including humans Living things and their habitats Scientific skills</p>

Class 5:

French	Art and craft	Music	ICT	Drama	PSHE	PE and Games	Woodwork	Forest School & gardening	Science
<p>Greetings Listens to more detailed stories with understanding. Writing and reading plays a greater part, Knowledge and understanding of a wider vocabulary related to different themes and confident use of verbs in the present tense and past tense. Further grammar conventions are explored. Pupils read extended <u>sentences and</u> construct their own, with more detailed descriptions. Role play & games continue.</p>	<p>Painting related to main lesson themes Clay modelling Chalk and pastel art Mandala Craft</p> <p>Botany – life drawing Still life Outdoor shading light and dark shading</p> <p>Greece and Egypt-anatomy drawing</p> <p>Crafts</p>	<p>Body rhythm Singing in rounds Copying beats and rhythm individually Recorder Timing and counts Basic music Notation</p> <p>Participation in <u>Tambo</u> Bamboo Music sessions</p>	<p>Spreadsheets Presentation skills Using and applying skills Online safety Using and applying skills</p>	<p>Speaking poems from memory Speaking in Drama games On the spot processing Story telling Movement characteristics Developing improvisation skills Opportunities to devise their own plays Class Play</p>	<p>Healthy lifestyles Mental wellbeing Keeping Safe Family dynamics Conflict resolution Money Democracy Growing up – <u>Puberty and</u> relationship education Money Moving on Aspirations</p>	<p>Games played encourage: -Risk taking -Building confidence -Strategy -Teamwork -Independence -Thinking outside the box</p> <p>Games: -Triangle Tag -Witches and Apples -River Bandits -Hunters and Hounds -Shelter, <u>water</u>, food. -Mc</p> <p>Participation in an intensive swim programme</p>	<p>Wood work projects connected to Main lesson themes in addition to projects derived from pupil interests</p>	<p>Pupils identify more flora and fauna, consider needs of fauna and undertake <u>projects for</u> these. Use tools with more confidence, make simple knots. Widen scientific vocabulary and work well as a class team. Children expand their environmental awareness in terms of conservation of the Morden Hall Park. Children taken on leadership roles with Forest school days with younger children</p>	<p>Forces Sound Electricity Animals including humans Living things and their habitats Scientific skills</p>

For further information on Subject Overviews please visit our website:

www.thelondonacornschoo.co.uk/curriculum

Assessment



At The London Acorn School we believe in developing creative thinkers and curious learners. Assessment is very much part of the cycle of learning at our school and not the 'end' of a journey.

In the Kindergarten years the teachers are guided by the ‘Statutory Early Years Foundation Stage’ (EYFS) criteria for assessment from Birth to 5 years. It sets out both learning and developmental requirements, as well as safeguarding and welfare requirements. This information is shared with our parents at parents evenings and in annual reports.

In our Lower School classes we use the PUMA and PIRA Maths and Literacy termly assessments. All of our teachers are skilled at working with children individually to plan their next steps in learning. Emphasis is given to providing written and verbal feedback regularly to the children and this is a part of the daily classroom experience. Small class sizes and a nurturing atmosphere ensure that assessment in this context really helps children to progress academically.

The curriculum breadth ensures that children experience time and space within a school day to discover a talent, explore, and learn through nurture not pressure.

Assessments administered in the Lower School:

SWRT – this is a single word reading test	The pupils read a list of words. This is useful at the beginning of an academic year and at the end of the year, so that value added can be observed. All pupils at the school read the same list. This assessment is useful in terms of looking at the children's abilities to decode words and can also be an analysis tool in terms of identifying where more work on phonics may need to be deployed, or booster literacy sessions offered. It also help us to pinpoint pupils who may need screening for dyslexia.
PUMA and PIRA Maths and Reading Comprehension assessment booklets	These are termly child friendly assessments. Easy to administer with progress tracked termly, these assessments provide the school with prior attainment data every year. They provide Reading comprehension and Maths 'ages' and also standardised scores. These assessments provide a diagnostic capability allowing teachers to focus on concepts and skills which the pupils need.
Spelling test	All children take the same test. This test is often taken at the beginning of an academic year and the end of an academic year.
Writing Assessment	The whole Lower School receives the same stimulus and completes a similar task based on age-related success criteria. This is assessed using the schools internally developed 'Learning Steps'. While we cannot compare this with peers nationally at the same age, it does provide the teaching team the ability to see the progression in writing throughout the school.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)



If Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) have been identified or become apparent to the Class Teacher and Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo), then a meeting will be held to address what additional support can be made available for the individual child. Please make us aware of any previous assessments your child may have had so that we can work together to provide appropriate support. Relevant external professionals will also be consulted if required.

For further information, please consult our SEND Policy:

<https://thelondonacornschool.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/TLAS-SEND-Policy-Sept-2021-.pdf>

Acorn Adventurers (1 – 3 years)



Our Acorn Adventurers sessions are designed for parents and carers with their children, aged 1 – 3 years, to experience The London Acorn School's holistic approach to learning at a young age. Families enjoy a relaxed atmosphere in the woods together, making simple crafts from natural materials guided by an experienced Forest School Leader. Children further experience seasonal songs, stories about Robin and his friends, and free play such as digging and den building. These sessions are a great opportunity for families to connect with nature, meet other families, explore The National Trust Morden Hall Park, and enjoy picnics and warm drinks at The London Acorn School.

For further information, please see our website:

www.thelondonacornschool.co.uk/acorn-adventurers



Kindergarten (3.5 – 6 years)



“Nothing is rushed.

The children sense that there is plenty of time to do things well.

Nothing to fear.

Each child has come to trust the certainty of the morning rhythm.

Nothing to fail.

In place of failure is the satisfaction which children experience when they are allowed to play.

No instructions.

Instead, self-direction and the willingness to imitate.”

Lynne Oldfield, *Free to Learn*

The London Acorn School Kindergarten forms a bridge between home and school, creating a secure and unhurried environment for children aged 3.5 to 6 years that is safe, warm and loving. Our Kindergartens are mixed age groups, which provide a traditional large family atmosphere, helping children to acquire social and emotional skills through experience, imitation and learning through play.

The Kindergarten curriculum is based on Waldorf Steiner Kindergarten practice. Children of this age learn through imitating the world around them. We aim to provide examples worthy of imitation and nourishing opportunities for children to learn experientially and feel the joy of discovery. We create a space for the child to unfold: to reveal themselves, develop their imaginations, and encourage natural creativity and curiosity.

The strong rhythm, repetition and reverence of the Kindergarten day, week and seasons support these aims. Sensitively structured and regular activities include, drawing, painting, baking, sewing, weaving, woodwork, outside expeditions, ring games, fairy tales, singing and poetry.

Our Kindergarten is a community of ‘doers’ and through ‘work’ children learn not only social and domestic skills, but are able to develop good motor and practical skills, too. Young children learn for life from life, that is why in Kindergarten, we aim to prioritise meaningful work, such as food preparation and looking after our environment. To look after our environment, we encourage activities like cleaning and tidying up, laying the snack table, washing up after we have eaten, etc.

Furthermore, throughout the year, the children experience the natural world during outdoor play or nature walks. In these walks the children are free to balance on logs and branches, explore the bushes, climb trees, run, hop, skip, roll and crawl. They encounter the world with all their senses, playing with stones, rocks, shells, leaves, earth, mud, snow, sand and water, or feeling the wind, rain or sun on their cheeks.

As the last year of Kindergarten unfolds, older children are gently introduced to following a teacher as they build a portfolio of craft projects through ‘daily work’ sessions. This will help them prepare for Class 1 Main Lessons to come.

In the Kindergarten years the teachers are guided by the ‘Statutory Early Years Foundation Stage’ (EYFS) criteria for assessment from Birth to 5 years. It sets out both learning and developmental requirements, as well as safeguarding and welfare requirements. This information is shared with our parents at parents evenings and in annual reports.

Kindergarten 2021-22	
8.40am	Arrival
8.50am	Ring Time
9.10am	Free Play alongside Daily Activity
11.00am	Tidy up
11.15am	Story time
11.30am	Main Snack
11.50am	Get Ready for Outdoors
12.00pm	Outdoors Time
1.30pm	Walk back to School
2.00pm	Pick up or After School Clubs

NB: On Fridays the entire school finishes at 1pm.

What this means at Home

- It is worth researching how you can bring rhythm and repetition into your home to support your Kindergarten child.
- Think about how you would like to model meaningful work to your Kindergarten child at home or set up things to encourage imaginative play. It will help them academically long term.

What this means at School

- The school undertakes to assess your child in a continuous manner and to contact you should any issues arise.
- Parents are invited to two formal meetings each year, and receive an annual written report.
- In Kindergarten, children unfold in a safe, homely, rhythmic and creative environment.

Background information for this topic: *The London Acorn School uses a Steiner-Waldorf inspired approach to education in Kindergarten. You can find out more about the EYFS in this setting with the 'Guide to the EYFS in Steiner Kindergartens' which you will find in Kindergarten or on <http://www.steinerwaldorf.org>.*

Lynne Oldfield is a UK Kindergarten practitioner and her book 'Free to Learn, Steiner Waldorf Early Childhood Care and Education' provides a good outline of Kindergarten practice.

Lower School (6 – 11 years)



The London Acorn School prides itself on offering a balanced and diverse curriculum; therefore, to an extent, no two days are the same. Despite this, rhythm and routine are regarded as highly important teaching tools in the Lower School: from helping children to feel safe and secure with daily timetables, to celebrating seasonal festivals throughout the year, rhythm and routine ground us in the present moment and are essential for health and well-being.

The Lower School day begins with greeting the Class Teacher at the threshold of the school building, marking that transition from home life to school life. The children put their belongings away and swap into slippers to wear indoors, which further marks that readiness for learning. As the children move throughout the building, the sound of song fills the corridors.

For each year group, Main Lesson is the first lesson of the day, which begins with Morning Rhythmic Time. Songs, poems, movement, reading, and mental maths are just some of the activities that take place within this time. It is an opportunity for children to settle into the school day through familiar exercises.

The Main Lesson continues to follow the Steiner Waldorf Curriculum, which is generally taught in 3–4-week blocks to allow for depth of study and focus. The Main Lesson typically follows a 3-day structure. For instance, Fables is taught in Class 2. In Main Lesson, children would recall the previous day's story through discussion, acting, movement, recounting, etc. Then, the children would complete an independent task, such as retelling a fable in their own words. The final part of Main Lesson is learning new content, primarily through the art of storytelling.

After a busy, creative morning, the children eat their snack together and then play outside.

Between Break and Lunch, the children are taught English and Maths daily, following the National Curriculum. These subjects are usually taught in differentiated classes to best support the needs and abilities of all the children. These skill-based lessons are distinct from the content of the Main Lesson curriculum; however, they compliment and strengthen one another, the children making links cross-curricula.

After Lunch and further outdoor play, the afternoon is an assortment of different Arts and Craft activities: from engaging with the natural world and practising bushcraft skills in Woodland Craft, to developing wet-on-wet painting techniques in Art, to learning to play new instruments in Music, the afternoons at The London Acorn School are a chance to unleash one's creativity.

At the end of the school day, children sing farewell to each other and their teacher, closing the school day with rhythm. Children can then stay on at school to engage in one of the many extra-curricular clubs on offer: games, drama, woodwork, etc.

Finally, at The London Acorn School, we do not set formal homework in the Lower School other than weekly spelling practice and reading at home, which we encourage you to support as a family. By Class 5, there are occasions when children may be expected to finish school work, complete research tasks or undertake creative holiday projects at home.

Lower School Day 2021 -22

8.30am	Arrival and Registration
8.45am	Main Lesson (Steiner Waldorf Curriculum)
10.15am	Snack time
10.35am	Break time
11.00am	Academic Skills Lessons (English, Maths, Languages, Science, etc)
12.30pm	Lunch time
1.15pm	Creative Lessons (Woodland Craft, Art, Music, Games, etc)
3.00pm	End of day routine
3.15pm	Pick up or After School Clubs

NB: On Fridays the entire school finishes at 1pm.

What this means at Home

- Please support literacy by modelling your joy in reading books and listening to your child read on a regular basis.
- Don't hesitate to ask your Class Teacher any questions on pedagogical approach, curriculum or assessment.

What this means at School

- The school delivers a broad curriculum, tailored to the needs of each class, the plans for which are shared with you at the start of each year.
- Twice a year, parent-teacher conferences are held and an annual report is arranged to discuss your child's progress.

Background information for this topic:

'Ofsted inspection of The London Acorn School, 2014 and 2017', PDFs available online.

'School as a Journey' - Torin M Finser. Straightforward and humorous, 'School as a Journey' provides an excellent introduction to the daily activities of a classroom using the Steiner curriculum.

'The Tasks and Content of the Steiner-Waldorf Curriculum' – Martyn Rawson. This is a thorough summary of the Steiner curriculum for every age group. Please note that although, we use this as reference, The London Acorn School may diverge from this curriculum and devises its own curriculum for the teaching of mathematics.

Technology

The London Acorn School has a low-technology approach to education for the Kindergarten and Lower School (ICT is introduced in Class 5 to prepare pupils for the transition to Secondary School). This is supported by our community approach to technology at home through limiting screen time as a family.

With recent research urging caution as extensive use of smartphones has been linked to decreased levels of happiness and increased incidences of mental illness, our aim is to produce young people who are at home in today's world of electronic communication, but not overwhelmed or ruled by it.

A high ability to discern the right data and edit and create intelligently will be a valued asset of the future. The key is not to bring on too much, too soon. Many tech company founders have famously restricted access to technology for their own children for these reasons.

What this means at Home

- Families undertake to support low-tech childhoods and maintain a low tech homelife to support the ethos of the school - especially in Kindergarten and The Lower School.

What this means at School

- The school undertakes to support low-tech childhoods and maintain a low -school community, especially in Kindergarten and The Lower School.
- Teachers are on hand to help coordinate whole class strategies and approaches from Class 5 onwards.

Background information for this topic: *iGen: Why Today's Super-Connected Kids are Growing up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy – And Completely Unprepared for Adulthood* by Jean M Twenge. *The Collapse of Parenting* Dr Leonard Sax.

Kim John Payne gives a talk on childhood and screens, accessible on YouTube [by following this link: https://vimeo.com/157472229](https://vimeo.com/157472229).

Behaviour

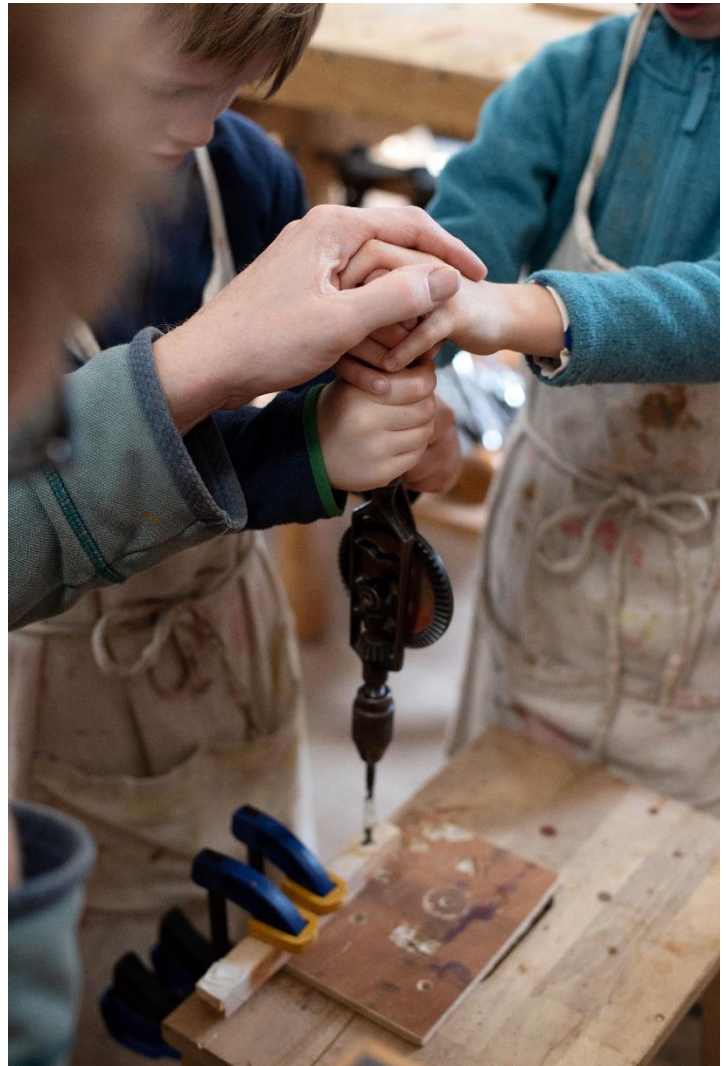
At our school we recognise that the most fundamental requirement for all children is that they feel safe and secure physically, emotionally and socially. Students need to feel safe in order to thrive and learn. They need to feel secure in order to want to participate.

We take our responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all the pupils in our care very seriously. Please read our [Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy](#) which sets out the policies and procedures we have in place. We will take appropriate action if we have concerns about a child's physical, emotional or social well-being. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any concerns.

Bullying is not tolerated at The London Acorn School and is taken very seriously. We would urge any parent or child to inform us if they are concerned. Any other behaviour that encroaches on child safety in any way will also be addressed with care. We will contact the parents of any child if we feel that a pattern of behaviour of their child encroaches on safe boundaries.

A secure daily rhythm with regular patterns of sharing food, creating quiet space, and sleeping is essential for your child's health and well-being and will help them to work positively with social groups at school.

A quiet regular bedtime routine is important for the quality of every child's sleep. Please keep 'sleepovers' with friends to weekends or holidays, so your child can fully benefit from school each weekday morning.



What this means at Home

- Parents and school partner up in maintaining strong consistent boundaries. This may involve being asked to a school meeting.
- Good communication is essential.
- Children should be listened to if they talk about events at school, but be aware that there may be many sides to one story, and do not hesitate to talk with a member of staff at an appropriate time if you have any concerns.
- Parents are responsible for maintaining children's boundaries appropriately out of school hours and when attending school events with their child.

What this means at School

- The school maintains a commitment to keeping all children safe and secure.
- We maintain a high standard of behaviour at school and have a School Code in Lower School which we expect pupils to follow, according to their age ability.
- The school undertakes to contact parents in the event of a child repeatedly forgetting basic boundaries.
- Staff always speak respectfully to children and they expect children to respond in this way in return.
- The school is responsible for maintaining children's boundaries within school hours.

Background information for this topic: Parents have reported that the following titles were helpful and gave results: *'Simplicity parenting, using the extraordinary power of less to raise calmer, happier and more secure kids'* by Kim John Payne; *'Stress free parenting in 12 steps'* by Christiane Kutik and Matthew Barton; *'You are your child's first teacher'* by Rahima Baldwin Dancy.

'The soul of Discipline' by Kim John Payne is a recommended read for setting clear and consistent boundaries and there are many other writers on this topic to ponder as you hone your style. For more reading on the development of resilience and impulse control, *'The Marshmallow Test, understanding self control and how to master it'* by Walter Mischel.

Festivals



A variety of festivals are celebrated at The London Acorn School primarily drawn from the traditional calendar of the British Isles, and they are treated as communal days rather than religious occasions, following the inclusiveness and tolerance innate in British values that we promote with students. Festivals help to mark the pace of the school year and offer students the chance to reflect on how far they have come in the past year and what they would like to aim for as they move forward.

Seasonal festivals, such as Michaelmas Festival and The May Day Festival, serve to connect us with the cyclical rhythms of the year, fostering a natural reverence for the wonder and beauty of life and nature.

Children of any ethnic or religious background are welcome at our school, and we respect the individual beliefs of families. We celebrate a range of religious festivals, connected to our studies in Main Lesson and Humanities. From Christian festivals, such as Christmas and Easter, to Jewish, Hindu, Islamic, Sikh and Buddhist festivals throughout the year, we strive to celebrate what is universal.

The children are actively involved in the preparation for each celebration through activities, songs and stories. Furthermore, festivals are times when the entire community can come together and enjoy creating a shared experience of joy and celebration. Whether it is coming together to illuminate the darkening days of the winter months or to delight in the refreshing signs of spring and summer sunshine, these annual celebrations are central to sustaining the community's sense of vitality and togetherness.

Upcoming festivals will be published in the weekly digital school newsletter, *'In a Nutshell'*.

At The London Acorn School we have zero tolerance for intolerance of difference in others. We do not discriminate on the grounds of difference in age, physical or mental capability, gender, sexual orientation or identity, status, race, religion, or belief. This applies equally towards our student, staff and family member communities. Difference is something to celebrate.

Regarding private occasions such as birthday celebrations and outings, we ask that parents are mindful of the need to be respectful and considerate of other pupils in their child's class. Birthday cakes, for classes to share are always welcome in school.

Whilst the school cannot be directly involved with families outside school hours, members of the London Acorn community are asked to uphold the values and attitudes that reflect the community's integrity, providing a family setting within which their children can socialise with friends in a safe and inclusive environment.

We welcome fundraising initiatives from parents for specific projects or equipment that might benefit our school. If you feel that you would like to be involved in an initiative of this nature, please contact our School Office.

What this means at Home

- Festivals are special community occasions and attendance is encouraged.
- Your generosity in taking part is appreciated at our school and volunteers offering help, including fundraising, are welcomed.
- The school requests that you work with social events involving children responsibly and with thought to any impact on class groups and individuals.

What this means at School

- The school appreciates that some festivals are not possible for working parents to attend and endeavors to hold at least some festivals at times when everyone is more likely to be able to make it.
- Birthdays are festivals too. Parents are invited to celebrations in Kindergarten and cakes are welcomed for snack time in Lower School.
- We do our best to welcome and cater for everyone and their needs at school.

Background information for this topic: If you would like to follow seasonal festivals at home, and we strongly support you doing so, we recommend Ann Druitt, Christine Fynes-Clinton, Marjorie Rowling – *'All Year Round – A calendar of celebration's*.

Christine Fynes-Clinton has also written a book all about sensitive and fun birthday celebrations – *'The Birthday Book'*.

Morden Hall Park

We are very lucky to have a school amidst 125 acres of parkland, yet still in our nation's capital, and this is all due to our good relations with National Trust. Please help us to continue to maintain these. By-laws for the park are set out on the notice board beside the park gate through to the garden centre. Please make sure that you comply with these.

The historic rose garden contains large, colourful and beautifully scented blooms in summer and hips in autumn, and children will find them attractive. Please ensure that children and adults take great care of this asset; the picking of flowers there is strictly prohibited for obvious reasons.

Here at Morden Hall Park, we are blessed with a range of sustainable options for travel to school, from tram, to bus, to tube, to a major green cycle route. Of course, if these cannot work for your family there is always the car.

What this means at Home

- Your child needs to have the right kit at school to engage with the natural world on a daily basis. Please ensure that wellies fit & the wet weather gear detailed in your class equipment list is on hand.
- Be prepared for clothes coming home needing a wash.
- We ask all our families to tread lightly on the planet and where at all possible to choose environmentally friendly ways to travel to school.

What this means at School

- The school uses Morden Hall Park as an additional outdoor classroom and all children regularly work and play outside, often closely observing changes in the season.
- The school offers gardening on the park for appropriate main lesson topics and gardening club, in association with National Trust.

Background information for this topic:

This book is very accessible: *'Last Child in the Woods: Saving our Children from Nature Deficit Disorder'* by Richard Louv.

Policies and Procedures

The following policies can be found on our website:

- TLAS Accessibility Policy September 2021
- TLAS Admissions Policy January 2021
- TLAS Anti-Radicalisation Policy September 2021
- TLAS Appropriate Physical Contact with Children Including Restraint and Intimate Care Policy July 2021
- TLAS Attendance Policy September 2021
- TLAS Behaviour Policy March 2021
- TLAS Complaints Policy July 2021
- TLAS Confidentiality Policy June 2021
- TLAS CPD Policy September 2021
- TLAS Curriculum Policy September 2021
- TLAS Data Protection Policy September 2021
- TLAS Dogs on School Grounds Policy September 2021
- TLAS EAL Policy September 2021
- TLAS E-Safety Policy September 2021
- TLAS First Aid Policy July 2021
- TLAS Health and Safety Policy June 2021
- TLAS Major Incident Plan September 2021
- TLAS Mobile Phone, Camera and Device Policy June 2021
- TLAS Nominated Persons July 2021
- TLAS PSHE Policy September 2021
- TLAS Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy July 2021
- TLAS School Code and Principles June 2021
- TLAS SEND Policy September 2021
- TLAS Spiritual Moral Social and Cultural Policy July 2021
- TLAS Whistleblowing Policy July 2021

Copies of The London Acorn School's policies and procedures are available at the School Office by request and can be downloaded from our school website:

<https://thelondonacornschool.co.uk/our-school/school-policies/>

Our School/Family agreement

Family of:

Child
name

Child
name

Family/
School
partnership
agreement:

I have examined the school handbook and agree to take all reasonable steps to uphold its principles and commit to the actions outlined in the boxes of this colour that appear within it.

- If I have any concerns (no matter how small), I will raise them with our class teacher or head teacher. If I have any serious concerns or complaints I will follow the school policy (published on the school website) to address these. I will not publicise or broadcast complaints or concerns without giving the school reasonable opportunity to respond using the complaints procedure. I understand that persistent breaches of this agreement or total failure to comply may result in a termination of contract by the school and withdrawal from school classes.
- I will support all school staff as they strive their best to fulfil the obligations of the school set out in the right hand boxes at the end of each section of the handbook.

Family
Finance
Agreement:

I agree to make appropriate arrangements with the school office to pay school fees promptly and ensure that prompt payment is sustained.

If my family departs the school, I understand that one full term’s notice is required, or payment in lieu, to recover any deposit. Finance terms and conditions on the school website.

I understand that any extra educational support necessary for my child, or optional coaching sessions (ie. Music), will be subject to additional charge.

School
agreement:

The School undertakes to take all reasonable steps to ensure that the educational principles outlined in this handbook are upheld and the actions outlined in the boxes of this colour are delivered. The school will do all it reasonably can to support each family to maintain this agreement.

(please tick where appropriate)

Image data
and
personal
data
instruction:

- ☐ I understand that in order to comply with good educational practice and statutory requirements, the school will hold personal data on my child(ren) and my family, but will share this only on a 'need to know' basis and in accordance with the school data policy, available on the school website.
- ☐ I agree that images of my child(ren) may be made to document their education and that this will be done within the school policy regarding use of camera and image, available on the school website.
- ☐ I agree that appropriate images of my child(ren) may be used to promote and grow The London Acorn School, now and in the future, according to the school policy regarding use of camera and image. I reserve the right to withdraw my agreement at any reasonable time.

Signatories

For Family

Name:

Date:

For Family

Name:

Date:

For School

Name:

Date:

Position:

Many thanks for joining our learning community; every family brings a special contribution.

A second copy will be made of this agreement to be kept by the school. The school may, from time to time, issue a revised agreement wording which you will be required to examine and sign.

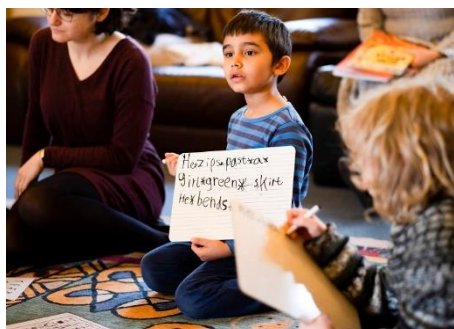


Morden Cottage
Morden Hall Park
London SM4 5JD

Tel: +44 (0)20 8544 9769

www.thelondonacornschoo.co.uk
info@thelondonacornschoo.co.uk

The London Acorn School CIC is a not for profit
Community Interest Company registered in
England as company no. 8266022
Independent school registration number
315/60



*This handbook is the copyright of
The London Acorn School 2021.
Further copies are available from the
school office.*