

CURRICULUM STATEMENT

At Inwoods Small School there is an innovative, practical approach to the acquisition of basic and complex skills. This includes the academic subjects such as numeracy, literacy and science, as well as social/emotional growth, relationship to learning, physical and artistic development, taking on of responsibilities and listening and communication. Above all, each child's whole being is nurtured, including their innate desire to learn. Learning is seen as a continuous, natural, and indeed inevitable process, that is however vulnerable to interference. When there is desire to learn, there is receptiveness to what is needed, at the time that is right for them. We often think of this as the flame of learning, which is looked after through child-led activities and teacher-led lessons, as well as in continual interactions throughout the day and through links with home. Included in this, all community members are encouraged to respect each other, staff and other adults. Children are encouraged to participate in the offered activities as well as make their own choices about what they would like to engage in, and become self-directed in their life and learning.

At Inwoods, the classes are not so much divided by age, but in vertical groups, with attention to dynamics, learning styles and teacher relationships. The groups can be arranged in narrow bands of age, such as 4-5, or wider, such as 8-11; this changes due to demographics of the student and/or teaching body. Transitions between one class group and the next are discussed between the staff and parents, and communicated in a timely manner to the children.

General Purpose and Approach of the Curriculum

The very small class sizes at Inwoods allow for an informal, friendly atmosphere in the classroom and for close personal relationships between each teacher and child, and between the children themselves. To do this, class group sizes have a maximum of 12, though there are also opportunities to work in larger groups for certain activities such as singing, sport, drama, nature walks, etc.

The curriculum is not a set of externally specified, separate targets to be uniformly imposed upon the children. There is instead a generalised plan of skills and information that are to be learned. In practice, the manner this is explored is adapted continually to meet the needs of the student groups and the individual children. Many local and practical factors affect the curriculum, including the seasons. Much of learning arises out of what we have or can find, and what we can do with it, or understand by it. Learning arises from the activities made available and from the freshness of learning about the world that emerges in the children. Education is a shared activity. It grows out of our relationships with each other and with the world around us. This is the general approach in which the teaching of specifics is grounded.

The class work overlaps with all the other school activities: indoors or outdoors, within the school grounds or in the surrounding woods and fields, in smaller age groups or with the whole school together. It may reflect the weather, the season, the particular interests of individual children or the particular expertise of staff, parents or other adults. Despite its minimal budget, the school has gradually acquired quite a substantial library of books, learning aids and a good stock of art and craft materials, and the staff are resourceful, making extensive use of recycled, second-hand and donated items, from classroom furniture to butterflies; and from charity shop bargains to the inevitable egg boxes, newspapers and magazines.

There is no guarantee that a certain set of topics and information will be covered in the child's time at Inwoods. However, we do find that the children have contact with and learn from a wide variety of topics and experiences

resulting in sufficient knowledge and learning capacity to understand (or know how to begin to understand) what they encounter both during and after their time at Inwoods. We are most concerned that children learn about the process of learning, and that they feel trusted and supported in their explorations and endeavours, and as a result, continue to meet life and further education with confidence and inner discipline.

Relationship to learning

Great emphasis is placed on creating an atmosphere at Inwoods in which children can retain/develop a positive attitude to learning. Bearing this in mind, the curriculum is meant to engage children, but not to entertain them. Children are expected to participate in the activities offered and to respect the teachers but also feel safe to question and express how they feel about what they are being requested to engage in. Though children are encouraged to become self-directed in their learning, they are not always left to their own devices without guidance. Aside from having sessions wherein reading, writing, literacy and other topics are offered or encouraged, they are also provided with opportunities to choose topics of study, pursue individual projects and link school work to home life.

Our aim is to create a spirit of enquiry and enthusiasm for learning. This is supported by helping the children to develop their academic competence within the whole context of their social, emotional and motor development; and this within the particular setting of a natural and largely open-air environment. Learning is seen as a continuous, natural, and indeed inevitable process. Our aim is to provide a friendly, family-like atmosphere in which adults and children of varying ages work, talk, make, think, cook, eat, sing, garden, take risks, meet challenges and play together.

Key to the positive learning atmosphere is the intention to have no coercion, which means no rewards or punishments. This doesn't mean there is no encouragement or guidance from teachers to the children. But praise can create dependence (praise has also been shown to discourage actual joy) and is actually similar to using threats and sanctions to manipulate behaviour. We feel that children don't gain confidence and positive life experiences by being praised for their attributes and successes, but instead by tackling obstacles and overcoming them.

Teachers aim to create an atmosphere in which children feel safe and able to contribute to the activities in the best way they can. Comparisons are discouraged and 'shy' and 'retiring' children are gently guided to participate and develop in their own manner, as are 'boisterous', 'active' children. Children's individual needs may 'rub up against' another child's needs, and the aim is to support this as a learning opportunity for all, while guiding and supporting the development of positive ways of being and interacting in this world.

The Open Classroom

All three spaces have an Open Classroom element at least 3 days a week. The Open Classroom is equipped with 'stations' with materials for maths, literacy, reading, art, craft, science, our world, and imaginative play. The children are offered a '3-hour work cycle'. During this period they are encouraged and often guided to choose and complete work and play that is appropriate to them.

The intentions of the Open Classroom:

- A rich environment, full of a large variety of materials that cater to many different intelligences, learning styles and topics.
- A learning environment where children experience a sense of freedom to work according to their own level, interest and pace.
- An opportunity for children to experience the joy of learning by providing various activities and materials that inspire them to explore.
- Where a child can grow with a sense of responsibility for his actions and his learning process by

providing an opportunity to plan his own educational schedule and reflect on the learning and activities that occurred each day.

- Children working together with children of different ages where there is no comparison and where relationships can grow, sometimes through challenges, to be friendly, helpful and constructive.
- A place where children can observe and learn about their own difficulties and aptitudes, and are supported in understanding their relationship with various topics, skills, attitudes, behaviours and habits.
- A setup that enables teachers to cater and create materials for individual and groups of children that are tailored to their learning styles and needs.
- An open setting for various relationships to develop between participants (students and staff).

Maths

Children are helped to understand that Maths is not just numbers and algorithms but it is shapes, patterns, problem solving and much more. Thus they are encouraged to see what important role it plays in everyday life. Integrating maths into art and craft, cooking, gardening and nature comes about sometimes through conscious efforts but many times simply arises spontaneously. Geometry lends itself to be integrated with art and craft; fractions with cooking and sharing; measurement with time, shop keeping; and measuring any number of objects in terms of length, width, height, weight, area, perimeter and volume.

When teaching any aspect of maths, great emphasis is laid on the child understanding the underlying concept in a concrete way. This is brought about by introducing a new concept when the child is ready, first through concrete materials, then moving on to pictorial representation and finally abstraction. While Montessori materials play an important role in bringing about this conceptual understanding, inspiration is also drawn from other materials including natural objects, origami, body movements and clay. Montessori materials are designed so that these not only help children understand every intermediate step in understanding a concept, but also in moving gradually towards abstraction. The sensorial aspect of the Montessori materials very much appeals to the young child. Once any concept is understood, practice helps children gain mastery. For practice work, there are numerous workbooks, worksheets, mental maths problems and games that one can choose from. Teaching a concept to another child is a reinforcing way of showing that a concept has been mastered and as such this is encouraged. Internalisation of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division facts are brought about through practice and playing oral games, and varies very much with each individual child. The importance of reviewing concepts learnt is gently emphasised.

Investigations are also an important part of learning maths and are approached through story problems, two-dimensional and three-dimensional puzzles as well as work with natural materials and clay. These are undertaken individually, with teacher guidance, in groups, or as part of another activity or topic.

Literacy

The approach to this vital and life-enhancing subject is varied and rich. This is carried out through clay-way work, topic-study, listening to and reading text, writing and editing stories and facts, handwriting practice, bookmaking and interdisciplinary enrichment. Our experience shows how important stories are to the children's understanding of literacy and of culture, and of the value of combining art with language. A wide variety of reading materials are available in all learning spaces, along with reading schemes, and stories are told in many aspects of the curriculum.

Learning reading is not pressured, but supported. Children are provided with a varied array of reading choices, including several reading schemes, and are read and told stories. Children read to teachers and to each other which both inspires the younger children, and reinforces the older children's reading. Parents are encouraged to read to their children (not just non-readers, but with all ages to develop/maintain a bond with reading, incite their interest in different forms of literature, keep their reading material at their understanding/maturity rather than reading level

and expand their vocabulary). Phonics is not considered the only way to learn to read, but essential in the process of gaining reading competency and supported by Davis Learning Strategies (see below).

Children are encouraged to write from early on and consider themselves as authors. They write their own stories, lists, diaries, recipe books, etc. They write reports on individual topics, which emphasise descriptive and informational writing, as well as research and composition. Older children are provided with spelling log books and are encouraged to use them frequently as well as make their own attempts at new words. During creative writing, spelling isn't emphasised, but is augmented to create subsequent drafts and in spelling sessions/lessons.

Spelling lists for children to learn are provided from frequency lists, the Unscramble Spelling scheme and individually with words taken from stories and from children's own writing. When a child is ready, separate spelling lessons are given to familiarise children with word groups and rules. The time spent on spelling increases in relation to the children's capacity and is carried out weekly and with homework when a child is in the oldest age group (9-11 year olds)..

Various appropriate dexterity and handwriting exercises are offered. Attention is given to the neat and correct formation of letters, in alignment with the child's development, increasing the precision as proficiency develops. The correct pencil grip is encouraged, we often use the term 'froggy grip', with additional pencil and pen grips when helpful. There is no pressure to learn cursive writing ,although once a child can read it and has good pencil control with correct letter formation, they are encouraged to begin learning it.

Punctuation skills are taught, especially in the context of the children's own writing, with exercises provided to expand and/or reinforce their knowledge. Grammar is gradually introduced with more specific lessons as the children are ready for it. The workbook scheme Nelson Grammar is available to support grammatical literacy. Care is taken that grammar doesn't impede literal creativity, but that the tools of grammar are used to communicate clearly.

Multidisciplinary Topics

Each class-group has many opportunities for multidisciplinary work.. Aside from many spontaneous investigations Personal Projects are a great way for children to spend time researching and presenting their findings on any interest. Topics, which can be initiated by teachers or stem from a personal project of a child, allow for many activities across the disciplines, often touching upon the humanities, geography, science, maths, literacy and the arts. They can offer opportunities for the children to work together, as well as to focus on particular individual interests. Both personal projects and group topics often determine many of the outings, guest workshop leaders, and even performances.

For the 9-11 year olds, there is a wide variety of topics in our rotation. Alongside the Ecology topic, botany is taught. In the 'Why am I Me?' topic, cell structure, DNA and genetics are explored in detail. In the 'Green History of the World', natural forces are explored such as suction, gravity, dissolution, and the story of evolution is delineated. In the topic of 'Water', many scientific themes relating to water as a vehicle for energy and substances and in need of testing and purification, are examined, as well as methods of measurement; biology is also delved into in the form of research about particular sea creatures. In the topic of ' Food', metabolism and chemistry are touched upon. The Solar System offers an in depth look into gravity, orbit, seasons, time and a look into elements. Personal Projects stem from within the above topics.

Science

A child is in a state of wonder and if this isn't interfered with, they remain curious learners. With this sense of wonder and curiosity they are naturally drawn to observing nature and exploring the inherent scientific phenomena all around them through play and more directed activities. This interest invariably comes into the learning environment, and as teachers of science, it makes our work that much easier. Through natural activities

and focused experiments, the children learn about scientific methods and processes. As the children grow, many of the current scientific theories are revealed. In most instances, the answers aren't given to the children, but explored in a process that can reveal more than any intended outcome.

While performing experiments, children are encouraged to observe closely and explain their observations in their own words when young and with appropriate scientific vocabulary as they mature. They are also helped to draw scientific diagrams and graphs. Children learn how to make hypotheses and test them, how much information it takes to prove a theory, and how to document experiments. In these ways, the children gain an important basis in how scientific understandings have been changed and revised over time, and see themselves as scientists. Integrating science into gardening, cooking and maths helps children understand the interconnectedness of science with other disciplines.

In the class of the 4-6 year olds, the children tend to explore the natural world, the forces, and biology with emphasis on animal and human biology. These often come up in relation to imaginative play, interests of individuals, and stories or topics brought in to the children by the teacher.

In the classroom of the 6-8 year olds, the 'Science Landscape' has a rotation of science activities that focus on the forces and biology. The children do the exercises, determine the outcomes and illustrate their process and findings, sometimes with additional graphs. Natural sciences and botany are also covered in the open classroom in the Science and World corners as well as Nature Day. Many topics delve into certain scientific subjects, such as the beginning of the universe, the history of the world, geography of different continents/countries, the development of plants and water. Personal Projects often extend the above topics, and/or explore such areas as space, the solar system, crystals, the geological forces, history from fossil records such as dinosaurs, the digestion or other bodily system, etc. 'Science toys' is offered one term a year and is an effective way of keeping the interest alive as well as creating 'wow' moments.

For the 9-11 year olds, science is taught a term a year and in connection with the Topic Study, see above.

Social/Emotional

Learning to cooperate during group activities, resolve conflicts and accept differences are all skills we value highly at Inwoods. The importance of respectful, alive relationships imbues the staff interactions with each other, the parents, and the children. This atmosphere and attention going across the board of all interactions is an important way of facilitating learning about this in the children, and at the very least, offers positive modelling. We take time in all-school circles, when an issue has arisen, and in our class sessions - both planned and unplanned - to look at the guidelines and ways we humans can learn to look after each other and the wider world.

Inwoods doesn't consider itself a 'free-school' or 'democratic school', however, we aim to and practice ways in which the children can take responsibility not just for their own learning, but for the fabric of the whole school. Children are given a real responsibility for decision-making and contributing to actions in the school, from adjusting and making rules, the Post Lunch Rota, to Celebration Days and Fairs.

Punishment and reward are increasingly shown to be ineffective in the long-term and tend to have differing results than the ones intended. Children at Inwoods are not punished for inappropriate behaviour but are made aware of their actions, and are given, often with the help of an adult, the space to reflect and make suggestions for right action in the future.

When conflicts arise during playtime or lessons, we attempt to address them immediately and sensitively by allowing both sides to be heard using non-aggressive language. We encourage children to put themselves in the 'shoes' of others and to recognise their own mistakes. We feel the ability to admit to incorrect behaviour is a sign of strength and emotional maturity. Problem solving is not only used as a way to navigate disagreements between

children in a moment, but as a way of looking at issues and decisions in the whole environment. This can encompass ways that the play equipment is used; procedures for apologising; timings and guidelines for spontaneous ideas of activities such as water games; rules for how to behave on an outing; etc. This actioning of responsibility often shows itself in the children as freedom. In the best moments, the kids feel confident about the ways things are done, that they are heard, and thus feel free to be themselves and to support others to be themselves. The hard aspects of how much time it takes to discuss things so that a mutual understanding is reached, and how even our best solutions do not solve all problems, are ongoing lessons about our world.

Observation and awareness are key elements to emotional health. The teachers carefully observe children, supporting them to see themselves and others in each moment without judgement. In the conversations with the children, the staff do not attempt to get the children to see what the adult sees, but to look truly at the child's own emotions, assumptions and conclusions.

General politeness is expected and children are guided in the use of appropriate verbal and body language in order to develop relationships: eye contact, facial expressions, energy level, non-judgmental use of words and means of expressing oneself, etc. Turn-taking, care of others, sharing, and generosity are all expected. It is understood that all people, teachers included, make mistakes, and the acceptance of this is a part of the family feeling at Inwoods that everyone contributes to. If a guideline is broken, the inappropriateness of the behaviour is made clear, and the issues are dealt with in various ways. Sometimes it is appropriate for a whole class group or the school to engage in the issue. Often, a teacher will talk with the child/ren about the situation and a natural consequences may arise out of this.

It is essential that children feel they have friends and can relate with a wide number of other children and adults. This is nurtured by observation of children who may need help in this area, and the careful creation of opportunities to increase special bonds, and, conversely, variety in relationships. Responses to children vary in response to their age and capacity.

Ongoing feedback between parents and teachers regarding social/emotional issues is considered important. Bi-termly Parent Meetings occur on weekends, with all the staff, as well as weekly meetings with individual parents. These are important links between home and school, and help create the culture of Inwoods.

PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education)

Because of our ethos, Inwoods spends a lot of time on PSHE from the first hello to the last goodbye. As the day starts with a 20 minute walk, road safety is an intrinsic part of the day, as is promotion of healthy activity and enjoyment of nature. Hygiene is covered daily before snack and lunch, in groups and individually, as well as with regular attention to fingernails and overall cleanliness. As each child participates in cleaning up after lunch once a week, they learn about how to keep a place free of germs and about contributing to the care of community space. The emphasis on children in a disagreement facing the problem(s) together with or without adult guidance teaches non-violent communication, empathy and how one's actions affect others. Regular Inquiry Sessions looking into various dilemmas give each child practice in expressing their opinion, listening to differing opinions, seeing how people grow and undertake to understand the world better. Care is taken to give body awareness lessons each school year to each group.

The topic studies of the older children cover a rotating range of subjects that all connect to the wider world and the impact humans have on it. As children enter the top tier of the school, they take part in more conversations and inquiries about the way they live their lives. They are expected to carry out more responsibilities and help to care for and direct other children. For key stage 2, body awareness classes are taught by staff to look into understanding of puberty and self-protection. Special care is also taken in the last year to prepare the children for the transition of leaving Inwoods and our leavers ritual both reinforces the person the child was as they grew up, and their readiness to continue to grow and learn in a new environment.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Inclusion

At Inwoods, the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students is paramount to our intentions. We offer a broad range of artistic, cultural and environmental opportunities and challenges. We plan our personal, social and health education and citizenship through topic, assemblies and ‘enquiries’ (EYFS and all ages) to help our pupils acquire values and skills to enable them to develop responsibility, resilience and independence, and choose their path in life. Daily discussion of rules, enquiries into life, and problem solving responses to conflict create an atmosphere that effectively nurtures pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. All pupils are encouraged to strive for academic excellence and a spirit of open and shared enquiry, whilst developing their individual potential and qualities of character so they can make a positive contribution to the world. We emphasise not only a broad understanding of cultures, religions, laws and politics, but awareness of the influences of the above, to help pupils stay clear and true in the decisions each makes in each moment. Citizenship and morality isn’t considered in just the local and national context, but includes environmental and worldly connectivity, from our influence on the smallest microbe to the largest biome. Spirituality, associated with the search for meaning and purpose in life, relates to connection and awareness, and to being truly present in life.

At Inwoods, we find it essential to guide children toward facing their fears and to calling on inner strength to be free and responsible. Moral development is concerned with pupils’ ability to make decisions about how they should behave and act, and the reasons for such behaviour. Pupils are encouraged to understand the need for understanding and empathy and to follow rules from conviction rather than because of sanctions or consequences. We offer continual opportunities within the curriculum, social interaction and taking on of responsibilities to contribute to the student’s spiritual, cultural and social development.

Listening/Communication

Part of the intention behind our curriculum and atmosphere that respects children, is that it encourages them to participate in their environment and to input into it. This naturally encourages children’s articulation and listening to others.

Children are given opportunities to develop their confidence in speaking in a group and to learn the importance of good listening. This is done in class as well as in Assemblies and Inquiries. Also, children take turns to show their work from school or home in groups or on their own. In all situations, the children are encouraged to listen carefully, and, taking careful turns, then share appropriate comments and questions. Many other activities for listening are offered in various lessons throughout the week.

We aim to create an affectionate and non-judgmental environment in which children feel safe to express their anxieties, thoughts and needs. A small student-teacher ratio ensures that each teacher can understand the individual personalities and thus offer the most appropriate challenges and support for each child. We recognise that resilience and facing disappointment are key in developing a confident, generous human being, and try to support the children in this

Physical

The Inwoods grounds offer two acres of beautiful playing area. Children have plenty of space to run, play games, build dens, work in the vegetable garden, make environmental art, play in sand and play areas, and climb small trees.

A minimum of one hour a day is given to outdoor playtime; plus a daily 20 minute walk, two hours a week for gardening and nature exploration and two hours a week for organised sports and games. Dance and drama are offered on a weekly basis to different groups, which are active as well as creative. Children learn to skip, develop ball catching and throwing skills, work on balance and coordination, and participate in games. Emphasis is placed on becoming a cooperative team member and developing a positive attitude to physical tasks outdoors. Each term, an all-school hike is planned, usually in a nearby setting, and emphasising stamina as well as appreciation of nature. Older children take longer hikes and field trips, sometimes further afield.

Contact with Nature

As we feel the stewardship and a loving relationship with our world is key to all people's lives, nature is given great emphasis at Inwoods. Thus, we have daily connection with nature, starting with our morning walk of half a mile through a farm and woodland. Lunch is often eaten out of doors, and in general, the grounds are considered as much a part of the school as the indoor areas. We have play fields, swings, a sandpit, a Wendy house, as well as many areas which are left wild to encourage flora and fauna. Our play apparatus encourages creative individual and group play and includes sports equipment and 'moveables' - gutters, tiles, wood and clay with which to create and explore. Our Wildlife Garden has a pond, a habitat wall and several unkempt areas and is used infrequently to encourage wildlife over human use.

To give a focussed time to actively be in nature, look after our grounds and look into our inner nature we have allocated one morning a week to Nature Study. For this, the children are in three groups which cross over our normal class groups with one leading teacher per group. The purpose of the arrangement of these groups is to foster good relations across ages, give time for teachers to observe and support intra- and interpersonal interactions, and to get the most out of the particular sessions on offer. In these groups they attend three sessions facilitated by three different teachers in rotation: 'Re-wilding', 'Garden Time', and 'Nature Explorations'

Re-wilding is taught by a local outdoor educator and includes walks, flora and fauna identification, ecology and various bush-craft activities. The activities relate to and depend upon the seasons. The children may be involved in a project, such as preparing posts for a railing onsite, or in a craft, such as whittling butter knives. They learn how to make fires, prepare weatherproof survival structures, make wreaths and much more. The sessions include valuable facts as well as activities.

Garden Time is a time to learn about the processes of plants and growing food, as well as a time to get hands and shoes muddy as the whole group (staff and children) dig, weed, sow, and maintain not just our large vegetable garden, but the beds and borders. The sessions start with a story which may include one from an indigenous culture, which explains or explores a natural process or act of stewardship. Throughout the year, various topics are explored including photosynthesis, the life cycle of plants, harvesting, gardening practices and making plant choices. Whenever available, our produce is included in our cooked lunches.

Nature Explorations is guided by each group's teacher and is a time for children to explore, play and find questions arising out of the natural environment of the Wildlife Garden. Equipment such as magnifying glasses, nets, bug- and pond-viewers and clipboards with paper and pencils are provided to facilitate the children making the most of this time.

Arts and Crafts

Drawing and painting are encouraged in all areas of the curriculum, right down to labels of hooks, cubbies and workbooks as well as illustrations in personal notebooks and projects. Mandalas and drawing are favourite activities for breaks in the Open Classroom or during our Solo Time sessions. Various styles of art and craft are explored in-depth: wet-on-wet painting, detailed crayon illustration, nature sketching, bookbinding, sewing, watercolour, ink, wax modelling, woodwork, junk modelling and nature crafts. Once a part of the oldest group children have the use of the Pottery Studio learning about ceramics and getting to do both hand- and wheel-work. Other opportunities are given throughout the year such as: photography, felt-making, withy work, origami, lantern making, seasonal crafts, puppet-making, gift-making, glass-painting, etc.

The Play of Painting, which is offered once a week for each child, is an introspective time using paint along the lines of the practice devised by Arno Stern. In the Painting Studio, the children and staff explore the formulations that inform our markings and drawings, in a teacher-less, calm space without judgement or comment. It isn't just a time to make art, but for the inner nature to be expressed and heard.

Drama, Music and Movement

Aside from the many opportunities for natural movement and play in our long breaks, guided movement happens in the morning circle 4 mornings a week. The movement is usually inspired by yoga, Qi Gong, Pilates and other fitness techniques, as well as being inspired by the children themselves. We also have a singing assembly at least once a week of the whole school together, and another assembly within which students speak about a topic of their choice. As and when it can fit into the afternoon schedule, a local village hall is hired out for movement and dance sessions. Many children take guitar or percussion at school in private tuition, and there are opportunities for casual playing of instruments, especially amongst the Oaks.

During most terms, the children will be involved in drama games, role-play, miming, body percussion and/or singing. Teachers allow for individual styles and in drama encourage children to act out their own stories. In many sessions, improvisation is explored and emotional and social topics delved into. At least once a year, the children prepare for a performance of some kind, usually in their class or session groups, to be performed at one of our seasonal celebrations.

Every other year, the whole school will produce a musical play to be shown to the wider community. Teachers are sensitive to shy children; there is no pressure to perform, they are allowed the space to gain confidence gradually with opportunities for observation, small roles, and other ways of participating, such as dancing, singing or off-stage work. Children are also involved in designing and making costumes, props and scenery for productions. The plays have so far included: Alice and Wonderland, Jumping Mouse, The Unluckiest Man, The Tailor of Gloucester, Captain Najork, and Pinnocchio. They incorporate movement, dance, singing and often such things as puppetry in the telling of the story. The plays give an opportunity for everyone to work in some way together on a large project, to learn scripts and songs, and to participate in transforming an imaginary story into living flesh.

In the years when there is not an all-school play, there is a casual collective performance in the Spring. Children also often perform in our many Celebrations throughout the year. These have so far comprised of whole-school songs, folk dancing, skits made by small groups of children and spontaneous songs with and without instruments.

Languages

French or Spanish for different ages are the modern foreign languages usually taught at Inwoods. The intention is to create an interest in and awareness of modern foreign languages and cultures. Our approach involves the children in speaking, listening and role-playing. The classes encourage children to listen and engage with French or Spanish, learn new vocabulary, speak in sentences using familiar vocabulary with appropriate pronunciation and show an understanding of basic vocabulary.

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

At Inwoods, our SEND provision starts immediately, as we believe all children are individual, learn at their own pace, have different capacities and challenges, and are meant to be sensitive. We feel that a lively spark of learning in life will take a person far, whatever their capacities, and accept children as they are, whilst also supporting them to thrive and excel.

However if children, from EYFS and upwards, have any special or differing needs, we meet these both within and outside of the classroom setting. Our many materials, including Montessori and Clayway, cater to people with learning challenges by being concrete and sequential, and were in fact developed to meet learning challenges. When a child shows lack of understanding, difficulty in manifesting self control or other learning difficulty, we begin by increased observation and eventually put strategies in place. These vary from introduction to particular

materials and strategies, increased learning support in the classroom, increased time at certain activities, time with our counsellor, Davis strategies and other one-to-one tutoring.

Eventually, outside specialists may be called upon. Parents are communicated with throughout this process. If any particular provision including one-to-one tutoring is deemed needed, then IEP's are drawn up and discussed termly with staff, parents. Students also look at their learning needs and help to decide their goals in age-appropriate manner.

We have made provision for wheelchair access and have many features that cater to people with physical and sensory disabilities as well as learning needs.

Davis Strategies

The scheme of working with modelling-clay to concretely connect students to the symbolic meanings of literacy and numeracy developed by Ron Davis and explained in *The Gift of Dyslexia* and *The Gift of Learning* has inspired us. Some of the teaching staff are trained in the Davis Learning Strategies, DLS, and one staff has received more extensive training and mentoring in order to fulfil a key support role.

We utilise DLS in the classrooms as an introduction to literacy, punctuation, and reading and to understanding the true meaning of words and concepts. This approach not only helps visual and kinaesthetic thinkers get to grips with these symbols of communication, but also gives everyone tools to help stay focused, relaxed and present and to understand our language more completely. The process of mastery, which is emphasised in all aspects of the scheme, supports true understanding rather than memorisation or rote study, and thus facilitates deep learning.

In addition to our work with the Davis strategies, we have one-to-one tutoring both in the classroom and in our dedicated Clay Room. We agree with Davis that dyslexia (and other special needs including ADHD) derives from a talent that can sometimes get in the way of smooth reading and other skills. Thus, we are not dismayed by noticing the symptoms or attributes of dyslexia and other learning needs, but do our best to make sure that the children are not blocked by their unique attributes.

Assessment and planning

Formative rather than summative assessment is emphasised at Inwoods. The withdrawal from the National Curriculum targets and its itinerant tests and exams is deliberate. We feel children do not benefit from these exams and comparisons. Instead, we rely on communication with the children, amongst the staff and between staff and parents to inform decisions about how the child is doing and what, if any, special considerations need to be made in their learning programs.

Teachers come together before the start of each term to share ideas for activities, discuss cross-curricular possibilities and plan directional themes for the coming term. Any important changes to the school/curriculum and outlines are announced at the beginning of each term in either a curriculum meeting or via the Weekly (a letter sent out to all the families of Inwoods). Parents have the opportunity to raise questions and concerns and are invited to offer suggestions and donate some of their time and expertise.

Topic Plans are designed by the teachers and added to the Inwoods Journals. Evaluations of lessons include notes of the individual children's responses, and on how to reinforce or extend the skills learned.

A progress report is written on each child and a copy is handed to parents near the end of the last term or posted on the 'Inwoods Journals'. Throughout the year teachers meet with parents to discuss all areas of their child's development. Notes are taken during this discussion regarding feedback from teachers and parents. Reports and notes are filed in the office.

Teachers meet weekly to share observations of children's progress and behaviour, and to make practical changes and plans. To create the safe and open atmosphere of Inwoods, it is essential for the staff to have in-depth communication about the children and issues that occur at school. Because of this careful attention, Inwoods may change more than many other educational settings, and flexibility from parents and staff is needed. All-school trips, theatre visits, themed days and other opportunities are arranged in as long-term a time-frame as possible, but many are inspired by the current discoveries of the children, and are thus made within a minimum of planning time of 24 hours.

Parent Meetings happen twice a term to dialogue, discuss plans and explore core issues relevant to learning and education.

Inwoods Journals

This is an online platform where teachers can communicate to parents their child's learning at Inwoods, and parents can respond. There are two aspects to the Journals: 'Posts', which are anecdotes, reflections and factual accounts of group and individual happenings; 'Academic Records', which describe more specific learning outcomes and 'units of work' for individual children. Parents can also view the overall curriculum framework and schemes of work for the following subjects: maths, literacy, science, topic work, and physical education.

What has been listed in the Journals is an overall outline of a great deal of what the children will be learning at Inwoods, but not all! Our intention is for the children to be taught important skills, to explore relevant topics related to life, and to be exposed to opportunities for quietness, reflection, contact with nature, and learning about oneself. Much of what the children do at Inwoods cannot be recorded or even identified, and certainly not measured. Our intention is to provide an environment in which children can learn without the burden of comparison, and meeting imposed targets, so the framework is not used as goal-making objectives, but as a structure to hold lightly. The Journals are to add another venue for communication, and as a space for shared record-keeping.

Structure of the week

Following a morning walk at 8:45 from Brockwood to Inwoods, and around 5 minutes of silence, the children join a circle outside for a short movement session followed by general announcements (weekly the circle is held indoors for a music session). They then join their regular class group in one of the buildings.

During the morning's 3-hour Open Classroom, they have a snack of fruit, nuts, and rice cakes or corn cakes before 11:30, have a break outside, and participate in many or a few learning and play tasks. They plan and record their activities, and note how well they are covering the various areas of learning (see above).

Lunch starts at 12:30 for the youngest group, 12:45 for the next group, and 1:00 for the eldest children. On days when a healthy, home-cooked lunch is served in the Big Barn, children wash hands, and then queue up in turns to get their food buffet style. They are encouraged to try food each time rather than follow habits of dislikes, and to eat a range of fresh and cooked vegetables. On the packed-lunch days, children again wash hands and eat in the Big Barn, outside under the gazebo, on picnic blankets or on the Oak House deck. Lunch break lasts until 2:00, but children take turns to do the Lunch Rota once weekly from around 1:30.

At 2:00 children can choose to participate in Solo Time, usually but not exclusively indoors. This is a calm, silent 'down-time' wherein children are encouraged to focus or relax on their own rather than continually being engaged in social interaction. They can also choose between Study Time, Outdoor PE and Physical Play, or an Artisan Activity. These classes vary throughout the seasons and days.

Pick-up is scheduled at 3:30, but the children may finish as late as 3:40 making the most of what's happening together. Parents are expected to arrive at 3:30 so as to be waiting to greet their children. Families and car-pooling groups often relax on site together, chatting with each other and staff and playing before heading off. Parents and car-pooling adults are responsible for the behaviour of the children in their care, and school rules are followed

even when staff are no longer in charge.

Flexi-Schooling

At Inwoods we offer the possibility for a child to be Flexi-Schooled. This means they can attend school part of the time and be educated otherwise, including by the parent, for the rest of the time. We feel this allows children to forge closer bonds with their parents, learn about subjects which pique their interest in-depth, and have the opportunity to broaden their minds with more trips and individual adult attention outside the school experience. It has been observed that some younger or less mature children need more time to adjust to a school setting and will thrive if they are given the time they need. Others have had an unpleasant experience of previous school and flexi-schooling at Inwoods allows them the opportunity to readapt to school life in an atmosphere free of fear and pressure.

The days in which the child attends is an arrangement made between Inwoods and the parent following careful consideration of the needs of the child. Parents are asked to sign on the Enrolment Form that they agree to being responsible for the education, safety and welfare of their child when not attending Inwoods Small School on the days and times agreed on with the Head Teacher.