

## ABC – Alternative Education

Brighton is known for its thriving alternative community so perhaps it is no surprise that there is a wealth of choice for parents looking for an alternative to mainstream education for their children. It can be a daunting decision to do something different so it's advisable to think carefully about what aspects of education are important to you (and those you wish to avoid!) and visit as many schools as possible.

The Brighton Steiner School, celebrating its 21<sup>st</sup> birthday this year, is one of 31 schools in the UK (there are 880 globally) that follow their own comprehensive and distinctive Steiner-Waldorf Curriculum. This international educational system addresses many of the current concerns of parents: there are no SATs, for example, and all children participate in arts, crafts, drama, music and languages alongside core subjects. The co-educational school for children aged 2 to 16 produces GCSE results above the national average but differs from mainstream schools in a number of ways. Children begin formal learning later, attending Kindergarten from ages 4 to 7 where the emphasis is on play, developing imagination and acquiring social skills. The Steiner Curriculum offers a broad range of subjects with a focus on interdisciplinary learning and nurturing in each pupil the abilities and confidence needed in life.

Montessori schools enable children to develop individually, at their own pace and in mixed age groups, and are popular all over the world. The Montessori Curriculum is developmentally based, providing equipment and activities suitable to the needs of the individual child. The Brighton and Hove Montessori School was established in 1985. Since then it has grown from a small group to a thriving school, educating children aged 3 to 11, following the National Curriculum whilst maintaining a distinctive Montessori approach and method.

The Dharma School offers **Buddhist-based education** to boys and girls aged 3 to 11 of any background, belief or ability. It follows the National Curriculum with a flexible approach, recognising the importance of teaching to the heart as well as striving for academic excellence. Children are introduced to the joy of stillness in daily meditation and parents are invited to school puja on Fridays. The Dharma School opened in 1994 and is the only school of its kind in the UK.

The Torah Academy is a primary and nursery school for Jewish girls and boys aged 2 to 11 years offering an extended National Curriculum to include Hebrew studies. As well as achieving excellent OFSTED reports, the school focuses on 'values for life' and offers respect, challenge and security for each child aiming for personal excellence.

Lewes New School opened 5 years ago and provides an educational environment on a human scale for children aged 3 to 11, helping them gain the skills, knowledge and understanding to develop their potential. The school ensures small class sizes and is informed by, but does not follow, the National

Curriculum. The school is piloting cognitive tests (CATs) in the top class as a more accurate view of a child's potential than SATs.

For further information please contact: Brighton Steiner School 01273 386300; Brighton & Hove Montessori School 01273 702485; Dharma School 01273 502055; Torah Academy 01273 328675; Lewes New School 01273 477074.

The Brighton Steiner School is an independent co-educational school for children aged 2 to 16. After Parent and Toddler and Playgroup, children are welcomed into the Kindergarten aged 4 where the emphasis is on learning through play. Formal learning begins in the Lower School aged 7. At 14 pupils enter the Upper School and begin GCSEs as well as following the renowned international Waldorf-Steiner Curriculum. The emphasis is on the holistic development of each pupil and respect for the essential nature of childhood. The curriculum offers a comprehensive range of subjects with a focus on interdisciplinary learning and the development of social and creative abilities alongside academic achievement. *For more information call 01273 386300 and visit [www.brightonsteinerschool.org.uk](http://www.brightonsteinerschool.org.uk) .*