



NEW PRIMARY SCHOOL OPENING IN 2021-2022

Preschool and Primary School

Meeting each child's needs

Stepping Stones is a bilingual French/English school neighbouring the Bois de La Cambre in Brussels. It is located in a typical 19th century townhouse with its own terraced garden.

Animated by her passion for children's education and many years of teaching French as a foreign language, in 2014 H el ene Nabokoff developed a new teaching method inspired by the principles of active teaching but using a traditional preschool curriculum, including a vertical teaching method for 3-to-6-year-olds. Our project is "tailor made", creating stepping stones to primary school where our principal goal is the wellbeing of child.

Each child has a unique background, potential and knowledge.

Our educational project is based on two fundamental principles:

- meeting each child's needs
- creating a happy environment of general wellbeing and so enabling the child to learn well

Preschool

The project aims to create a bilingual (French/English) educational environment for children aged 3-6 years using the vertical teaching method. This method involves combining the three years of pre-school in one class, with the idea that age does not restrict learning and that a mix of ages is an added value.

The younger children have not yet adjusted to a school environment which can create difficulties that come from imposing a new routine too quickly or from rushing them into learning. Welcoming younger children requires time and adjustment for all those concerned. However, thanks to vertical teaching and our commitment, the older children develop relationships, organise points of reference and put in place the rituals which reassure the younger ones and offer the stability they so need.

It is enormously beneficial all around as it allows the older children to evolve and develop skills at their own pace with all the tools they need within their range. The younger children in turn have the possibility of expanding their knowledge according to their individual capabilities. This allows us to gauge each child's potential early on and to understand how they function and learn. Moreover, the older children are invested in an educational role and their presence within the group is reinforced.

The name 'Stepping Stones' was chosen as it evokes the idea of helping one make progress towards a specific goal. This illustrates, to my mind, the passage from preschool, crèche or home to primary school. We are this transition, in which, little by little, young children will grow up.

The teachers and other members of our staff come from very different backgrounds but our passion for children's development and education drew us to this project.

Primary school

Starting in September 2021, Stepping Stones will welcome children for the first grade of primary school, with the goal of opening all the grades up to age 12 for the following academic year (2022-2023).

<https://www.steppingstones-school.com>

Children are the agents of their own learning process, guided by the teacher, at their own pace. Just as in our preschool, we take our inspiration from both the Montessori approach and more "traditional" schools. For the primary cycles serving 6-to-8-year-olds and 9-to-12-year-olds, we can also incorporate our daily lives, the city and the nature that surrounds us as tools for learning. Our weekly schedule will therefore include a day spent either outside our school grounds or, if the weather keeps us indoors, then interacting with external presenters who will help us develop class projects. These activities will lead the children to explore and become familiar with their environment, and to gain practical experience around some of the academic or social concepts they have been studying.

As each child is unique, differentiation is central to our teaching approach. We aim to guide every child to their full potential through the acquisition of a solid base of fundamental knowledge and skills, including psychosocial skills (managing one's emotions, developing creative and critical thinking...). We follow the programme of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation.

However, our differentiated teaching strategies push us to rethink the standard school setup (staff, schedules and routines, learning aids and tools). Our goal is to allow our students to reach or surpass the official programme using tailored methods that afford each child the self-esteem and wellbeing that are essential, in our view, for learning. We do not want to simply teach our students; we want to share with them the joy of learning and the desire to do so.

Aims

To provide a safe educational environment for children aged 3 and 6 years (preschool) and beyond (primary school), supporting their development through the teaching of life skills and helping each child become autonomous as well as gaining both the knowledge and skills to flourish in primary school.

Stepping Stones aspires to be a place where there are no losers, only winners, with the help of a positive, validating and enabling education. In order to comply with this, it is essential to have passionate teachers who are committed to taking on their task with the child's full potential in mind and with the wellbeing of all, children, parents and teachers as their primary concern.

Like a tailor making a suit and adjusting it to the client, Stepping Stones will adapt to each child with the utmost respect.
