

# **Education Concept for Neue Schule Wolfsburg**

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# 1. The Education Concept in Summary

In pursuit of its Corporate Strategy 2018 and the goal of achieving a status as “Most Attractive Employer” as defined therein, the Volkswagen Group has donated the gift of establishing a school, Neue Schule Wolfsburg, to the City of Wolfsburg on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of its founding. The school is expected to add to the region’s appeal, further its future prospects and contribute to the quality of life there. A committee of international experts was charged with formulating the concept for this school.

Neue Schule Wolfsburg will seek to provide comprehensive education excellence and the best possible developmental support and incentive for the children and adolescents enrolled there and, on that basis, to consistently respond to and cultivate the inherent zest, inquisitiveness, eagerness to explore and creative drive of its charges. With class sizes restricted to no more than 20 pupils and the employment of dedicated educators, students will all receive exceptionally strong personal support.

This is reflective of the school’s philosophy of viewing the individual from a holistic perspective. Its broad-based syllabus will accommodate core curricula content as prescribed by statutory regulation.

The school’s education programme will subscribe to the following five keynote areas of emphasis: 1. internationality, 2. science & technology, 3. economics, 4. art & culture, and 5. the cultivation of students’ individual gifts and talents.

The international orientation of the school will be characterised by more than just an emphasis on foreign languages, but rather will also be an inherent element of the content taught in other subjects and will be expressed in the curriculum interweave as well as defining the school’s cultural profile.

The Wolfsburg location offers a unique reference environment for students to observe the practical reciprocity of science theory and technical application. It will be part of the mission of the school to devise curricular content which exploits this opportunity for first-graders all the way to senior students. Neue Schule Wolfsburg will deliberately take a novel approach in this respect.

The school will place a great deal of emphasis on a practise-oriented approach to imparting on students substantiated knowledge of the business and work world, and will do so in close collaboration with local enterprise. In an endeavour to open doors to that world and establish prospects for its students, Neue Schule Wolfsburg will seek to expressly and systematically develop business acumen in its students.

Neue Schule Wolfsburg will also set a deliberate focus on art & culture. Creative expression in art, music or theatre holds much, oftentimes underestimated, potential for promoting the development of emotional intelligence, social skills and, ultimately, an individual's personality as a whole.

Another of the focuses, the targeted and scientifically sound promotion of personal talents and gifts, will be a central concern for educators at the school right from the entry level. Children have all kinds of different talent profiles, and they require guidance to achieve personal excellence. Young children and adolescents alike will best attain such excellence over time in an environment which embraces and reflects differences and allows for effective, interactive complementation. That is why, as PISA findings and the results of research in the field of education and giftedness have proven, a heterogeneous student body brings the best individuals to the fore at all levels. It is conducive to the development of exceptional talents and thus produces the performance elite that society relies on to thrive.

As a privately run institution, Neue Schule Wolfsburg will enjoy leave to explore, develop and implement novel pedagogical concepts within the defined framework of its status as an independent, “learning” school. Neue Schule Wolfsburg will seek to make vigorous use of the advantages this independent scope for educational engineering provides it to enrich the education landscape and to work closely and consult with other schools, education facilities and the corporate community. The non-profit association of patrons is made up mostly of Volkswagen AG companies. The association has applied to have the school registered as a state-approved alternative school, which approval is contingent on a number of conditions to be reviewed by the state school authorities.

As a school which is constantly engaged in a learning process, Neue Schule Wolfsburg will be a quality-conscious operator, securing its productivity potential and the standard of the results it produces through systematic and systemic everyday processes, innovative continual development, regular and multi-perspective evaluation, and results reporting.

Neue Schule Wolfsburg will seek to provide support to all its staff members and for the development of their personal potential across all departmental lines, thus establishing a creative environment for the attainment of new knowledge and the exercising of innovative spirit. In addition to regular evaluations and the academic supervision of practises at the school, the concept allocates space, time and resources for continued training, either individually or in teams, the prerequisite for which will be a comparatively low number of uniformly obligatory classroom periods, especially with respect to primary-level schooling, thereby allowing a certain amount of autonomy.

This “performance profile” will see Neue Schule Wolfsburg additionally satisfying the various quality requirements as set out in the “Orientation Framework for School Quality in the State of Lower Saxony” (issued by the Lower Saxony Ministry of Education in 2006).

While Neue Schule Wolfsburg will be exceptional in many different ways, it will be essentially exceptional in terms of how the curriculum, learning and spatial-settings components all interact with one another. For example, the curriculum will be influenced, not least, by certain forms of learning and learning results, just as it in turn will provide orientation for the definition of learning arrangements. And the special design of its classrooms will have bearing on the curriculum and on how students learn.

The curriculum will centre on a number of pedagogical principles: At this school, learning competencies will be indigenously developed in children starting in the very first year, with distinctions made from the outset (personalised study plans and exploratory learning), and a student's development transpiring systematically in all fields. Autonomous, proactive learning in which students assume a measure of accountability for their personal progress will be a given in all five learning fields, from the first to the final year, at Neue Schule Wolfsburg. Learning arrangements will consist chiefly of open forms of learning and mixed-age lessons. The teaching staff will be specifically primed and trained to operate within this concept.

Student heterogeneity at the school – one of its most distinctive traits – will call for learning situations which are as supportive as they are challenging. The pedagogical diagnostics which this school will employ shall be a fundamental instrument for the definition of all its teaching and learning processes and will constitute the basis for a professional educational approach to dealing with heterogeneity. The teaching staff will comprise members who possess core competencies in the practical theory and application of modern methods of educational diagnostics and learning coaching. The objects of such diagnostics will include general and subject-related learning competency, giftedness, the analysis of learning biographies and learning processes.

Students at Neue Schule Wolfsburg will take their lessons in a variety of settings within the school building and its surrounds. Classrooms will be designed to act as “third parties” in the teaching concept, with architectural and interior characteristics adding to the quality of the education received in them.

The school will formulate its own curriculum. That curriculum will be composed in such a way as to make the educational standards prescribed by the Conference of Education Ministers and the core curricula of the State of Lower Saxony incorporable into it. The school curriculum at Neue Schule Wolfsburg will be centred on principal, theoretically and practically substantiated pedagogical ideas and on a view of the individual to which all faculty members shall be obliged to subscribe as part of their teaching assignment.

The learning process will be partitioned into learning fields, subject areas and projects, all organised with a view to the declared aim of Neue Schule Wolfsburg to develop its students' gifts and talents. Talent is understood to mean a student's individual potential to master a certain skill particularly well. To translate that potential into actual performance results demands learning and teaching competency. One of the bases for appropriate pedagogical practise at Neue Schule Wolfsburg will be the Integrative Model for Nurturing Talent.

Given its international focus, the school's curriculum will be receptive to stimulus from other countries – via partner schools, for example, or international networks such as the schools at the 51 sites around the globe where VW operates, or as a result of information sharing and international co-operations or participation in multinational projects or observer exchange programmes.

Students at Neue Schule Wolfsburg will be eligible to acquire any of the general education certificates laid down in the education law for the State of Lower Saxony. Secondary II-level certification will require dual qualification attainable in a collaborative programme of general and vocational education – to be most commonly offered in technical fields.

In addition to offering conventional foreign-language certification, issued upon the successful completion of examinations conducted by a foreign institute (in business English, for example), Neue Schule Wolfsburg will be exploring the possibility of eventually including an IB (International Baccalaureate) and/or an AP (the US Advanced Placement degree) in its programme of international examinations. To begin with, bilingual elements in different languages will be incorporated into lessons in such a way as to not only make international examinations possible, but to actively pursue them.

The principles, guidelines and measures outlined hereafter define Neue Schule Wolfsburg as an institution which will absorb important stimulus arising from the international discourse on school education and then undertake to reconcile it with the broad array of options available to it at its Wolfsburg location. In the view of the founding committee which formulated the concept for the school, Neue Schule Wolfsburg will offer dedicated teaching professionals an opportunity to be part of an exciting mission to build “their” school.

## 2. Background on the “Neue Schule Wolfsburg” Project

As part of its Corporate Strategy 2018, Volkswagen AG has set itself the goal of achieving a status as “Most Attractive Employer”. Its attraction as an employer is closely pegged to how attractive its home region is to potential employees. Enhancing the education landscape of the region is an important element of the strategy, given that competitive capacity, innovative capability, economic growth and prosperity all depend on good education.

It is before the background of this imperative that the Volkswagen Group made a “gift of education” to the City of Wolfsburg on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of its founding in the summer of 2008. That gift, the establishment of Neue Schule Wolfsburg, is expected to help raise the prospects of and quality of life in the corporation’s home-base region.

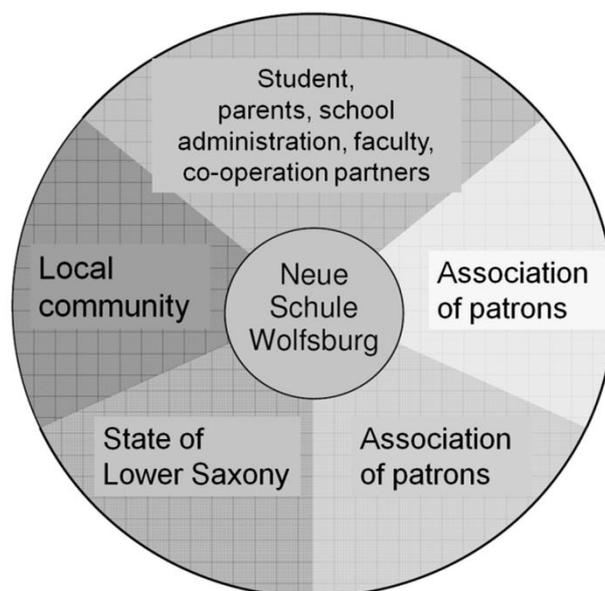
In the summer of 2008 an internationally staffed team of top-rate experts came together to form the founding committee under the chairmanship of Prof Peter Meyer-Dohm and work on the education concept for Neue Schule Wolfsburg. That committee comprises:

- Prof Mats Ekholm, University of Karlstad, Sweden
- Prof Christian Fischer, Central Switzerland Univ. of Education, Lucerne
- Prof Uwe Hameyer, Christian-Albrechts University, Kiel
- Reinhard Kahl, Future Archive, Hamburg
- Armin Lohmann, Lower Saxony Ministry of Education, Hanover
- Prof Matti Meri, University of Helsinki
- Uwe Möller, German Club of Rome Association, Hamburg
- Klaus Mohrs, city councillor, Wolfsburg
- Susanne Owen-Hughes, Berlin British School, Berlin
- Barbara Riekmann, head mistress, Max-Brauer School, Hamburg
- Dr Erika Risse, head mistress, Elsa-Brändström Grammar School, Oberhausen

### 3. Societal Context

As a privately run institution, Neue Schule Wolfsburg will enjoy leave to explore, develop and implement novel pedagogical concepts within the defined framework of its status as an independent, “learning” school. Neue Schule Wolfsburg will seek to make vigorous use of the advantages this independent scope for educational engineering provides it to enrich the education landscape and to work closely and consult with other schools, education facilities and the corporate community. The non-profit association of patrons is made up mostly of Volkswagen AG companies. The association has applied to have the school registered as a state-approved alternative school, which approval is contingent on a number of conditions to be reviewed by the state school authorities.

As societal institutions and learning organisations, schools are directly coupled to their communities. A stakeholder management concept will enable those community segments which exercise direct influence on the school (the mission environment) to be systematically addressed and managed. The following graph illustrates which stakeholder groups are relevant to Neue Schule Wolfsburg.



The viability and attractiveness of Neue Schule Wolfsburg will be profoundly influenced by its capacity to satisfy the interests and demands of its various stakeholders. To safeguard its operability, the school – or, more specifically, the school administration – will be obliged to accommodate and coordinate the various interests of the different stakeholder groups. For its operations will depend on the provision of a wide range of resources: material resources (capital, material goods, etc.), immaterial resources (knowledge and information) and goodwill resources (commitment, acceptance, legitimacy, etc.).

The stakeholders with the most intimate ties to a school system are those people and groups who directly represent it: the school administration, its faculty, the students, their parents and the co-operation partners engaged with the school. They all expect to be able to contribute and indulge their respective skills and competencies.

The underlying idea of the Neue Schule Wolfsburg concept is that dedicated teaching professionals will build and shape “their” school. This creates a sense of ownership and the inspiration it fuels. Individualised learning methods will be used to ideally facilitate the development of students’ personal areas of aptitude, with close parent-teacher collaborations further helping to optimise the teaching process.

One of the essential elements of the Neue Schule Wolfsburg concept is the continual integration into that process of insights acquired from the work world. The school will seek to establish a network with that world so as to ensure an on-going course of knowledge transfer. Important stimulus in this respect will be provided by the Volkswagen Group, with the school’s particular emphasis on science and technology education crucially adding further impetus to this effect.

As already discussed in the previous section, the Volkswagen Group has a vital interest in seeing a school with an international focus and a priority commitment to individual talent development established as part of the diverse education landscape at its home base in Wolfsburg. Volkswagen AG is the chief contributor to the non-profit association of patrons for Neue Schule Wolfsburg.

The local community will have a vested interest in the school's capacity to enrich the existing education landscape, without, however, dominating it. The City of Wolfsburg and the school administrations and faculties of other schools in the area will be specifically interested in the enrolment prerequisites (i.e. accessibility) for students and the extent to which the resources made available to the school by the municipal authorities are comparable with those provided to existing local schools.

The interests of the City of Wolfsburg are similar in nature. Two years ago it embarked on a programme of modernisation for schools in Wolfsburg, and it wishes to see this new school enhance its education landscape. The official catchment area for Neue Schule Wolfsburg will be Wolfsburg and the surrounding region. It is expected from the outset to both absorb and exercise stimulus from and for the city and the region and to engage in vigorous discourse and co-operation with other local schools.

The State of Lower Saxony has a categorical interest in independent schools: Section 139 of the Education Law of Lower Saxony states, "Independent schools are a supplementation to the system of state-run schools, which supplementation is outlined in Section 7 Para's 4 and 5 of the Federal Constitution, and they exercise an important role in the pursuit of diversity in the school system." Alternative schools do, however, "require the prior consent of the education authorities for their establishment and operation" (Section 143 (1) of the State of Lower Saxony's Law on Education). Such consent is contingent on the fulfilment of a variety of conditions, the monitoring of which is incumbent upon the state education authorities.

## 4. The Learning School and Ensuring Quality

Schools, more than most institutions, have an obligation to commit themselves to a course of continual learning as they seek to teach young people the skills with which to navigate their fortunes and contribute towards the on-going development of a dynamic and intercultural world. It is a school's responsibility to incorporate the local community, most particularly families, into that learning process.

Neue Schule Wolfsburg will be a "learning school". It will be committed to the pursuit of quality. It will secure its productivity potential and the standard of the results it produces through systematic and systemic everyday processes, innovative continual development, regular and multi-perspective evaluation, and results reporting.

Learning organisations are dynamic systems in a state of constant progress. A learning school requires critical monitoring of its "tried and proven" practises. It engages in the ceaseless quest to procure new solutions and develop its own. The toolkit it employs to facilitate this learning process includes the following instruments:

- Peer reviews
- In-house and third-party evaluations
- The installation of interdisciplinary teams
- Knowledge management
- Networking with other schools
- Monitoring of developments in educational fields in other countries
- Reflection forums.

Neue Schule Wolfsburg will seek to provide support to each and every member of its faculty and to facilitate the development of their personal potential through cross-departmental collaboration, thus establishing a creative environment which embraces the attainment of new knowledge and the exercising of innovative spirit.

This “performance profile” will see Neue Schule Wolfsburg additionally satisfying the various quality requirements as set out in the “Orientation Framework for School Quality in the State of Lower Saxony” (issued by the Lower Saxony Ministry of Education in 2006). Those requirements are grouped into the following six quality categories: results & accomplishments, learning & teaching, school culture, school management, teaching-staff professionalism, and school-development goals & strategies.

A system of regular evaluations and the academic supervision of operations will be in place at the school to ensure those requirements are met. The concept also allocates space, time and resources for continued training, either individually or in teams, the prerequisite for which is a comparatively low number of uniformly obligatory classroom periods, especially with respect to primary-level schooling, thus allowing for a certain amount of autonomy. That includes making an appropriate number of work areas available at the school – work cabinets, for example, and architecturally suitable conference rooms for work in small groups.

Neue Schule Wolfsburg will perceive itself to be a “learning school” within the context of a greater education environment which calls not only for intercourse with other schools (the horizontal perspective), but will also see it pursuing collaboration with institutions from a learning-biographical or vertical perspective on both the pre- and post-school levels, i.e. with kindergartens and preschools and with adult-education facilities.

As a “learning school”, Neue Schule Wolfsburg will essentially also manifest the concept of an intergenerational curriculum (lifelong learning) which will include classes for parents (“parental school”). Such classes can address topics which hold particular relevance in the threefold context of school, family and student concerns, for example “Learning Strategies”, “Media Education” or “Puberty”.

The “quality” theme discussed earlier is closely tied to the issue of how the “knowledge” resource is managed at Neue Schule Wolfsburg. In acknowledgement of its new role in the region, the school will make a point of letting staff members from other schools or other interested public parties share in its knowledge by offering them a programme of selected courses.

## **5. Educational Characteristics**

### **5.1 Focus Areas**

Neue Schule Wolfsburg will aim to provide an optimum mix of challenge and support to bring out the individual best in its students of all ages. Because it will take a holistic view of the individual, its syllabus will be appropriately wide-ranging. The decision to operate Neue Schule Wolfsburg as a school with all-day compulsory attendance for all students starting in year one allows for manifold ways to individualise the learning process and develop daily, weekly or annual rhythms around it. The curricular content expected to be developed at the school will see it breaking new ground. And it is worth noting that its strategy will be systematically developed to produce a homogenous curriculum from year 1 to 13. Neue Schule Wolfsburg will accommodate the core curricula content prescribed by statutory regulation, but will set particular focus on the following five areas:

#### ***1. Internationality***

Education is a state of mind, and so is internationality. That is why this particular area of focus is not just about teaching foreign language skills. The real goal will be to enable students to develop an understanding for other cultures in a globalised world and to impart the insights and teach the skills extensively required to find one's way in this world and help shape it. This objective will be reflected in classroom content, in the curriculum weave, in the makeup of the faculty and the anatomy of the student body, and in the school culture. It is a well-known fact that interaction with people from other cultures broadens the mind and helps students to develop a better sense of self, a notion of how they fit into the world and an appreciation for the imperative of global co-existence.

## **2. Science and Technology**

Wolfsburg provides a unique geo-economic environment in which to breed enthusiasm for scientific theory and technical practise. Profoundly influenced by the presence of the Volkswagen plant, its subsidiaries and components suppliers, and with a rich offering of educational attractions such as the phaeno Science Centre, the Planetarium and the Autostadt theme centre, Wolfsburg boasts much in the way of opportunities for co-operation between Neue Schule Wolfsburg and local partners. With a keen view to the latest technological developments, the school will incorporate practical projects into its curriculum with the hope of provoking curiosity in its students, exciting their exploratory senses, teaching them to appreciate the rewards of learning and generally inspiring them.

## **3. Economics**

Another area of focus for Neue Schule Wolfsburg will be its practise-oriented approach to imparting on students substantiated knowledge of the business and work world and to doing so in close collaboration with local enterprise. By employing intelligent learning concepts and enlisting the participation of experienced practitioners from a variety of business fields, the school will seek to encourage entrepreneurial thinking, stimulate its students' capacities to engage in the work world in a contributory sense and create awareness among its students for their personal role and responsibilities in the mechanisms of business and commerce.

## **4. Art and Culture**

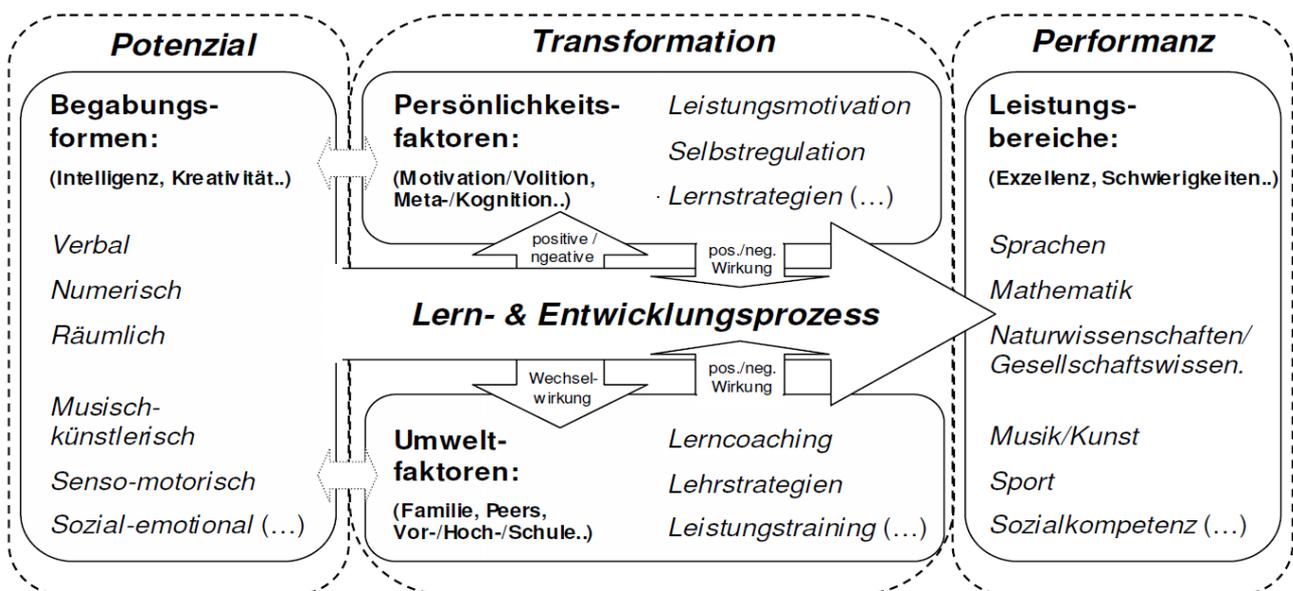
The learning field of art and culture serves as a special platform on which to explore and develop one's talents. Students are endowed with such a variety of individual talents, and this learning field will allow them to express those talents in a whole array of forms all designed to foster self-confidence, self-efficacy and self-pride and to build their communication skills. Here too, Wolfsburg has much to offer in the way of extracurricular stimulus: the Wolfsburg Art Museum, for example, or local theatre.

It will be left to the discretion of the school administrators and teaching staff to

devise concrete implementation concepts for the focus fields of learning.

## 5. Talent Development

One of the specific objectives of Neue Schule Wolfsburg will be to cultivate the individual skills and talents of its students on a scientifically substantiated basis. Talent is understood to mean the individual capacity to perform well in certain areas. “A talent always constitutes performance potential (an essential prerequisite), but does not attest to any actual performance achievement.” (Stern, 1916, p. 110.) Turning talent into achievement requires teaching and learning competencies. One of the bases for pedagogical work in this particular context at Neue Schule Wolfsburg will be the Integrative Model for Nurturing Talent:

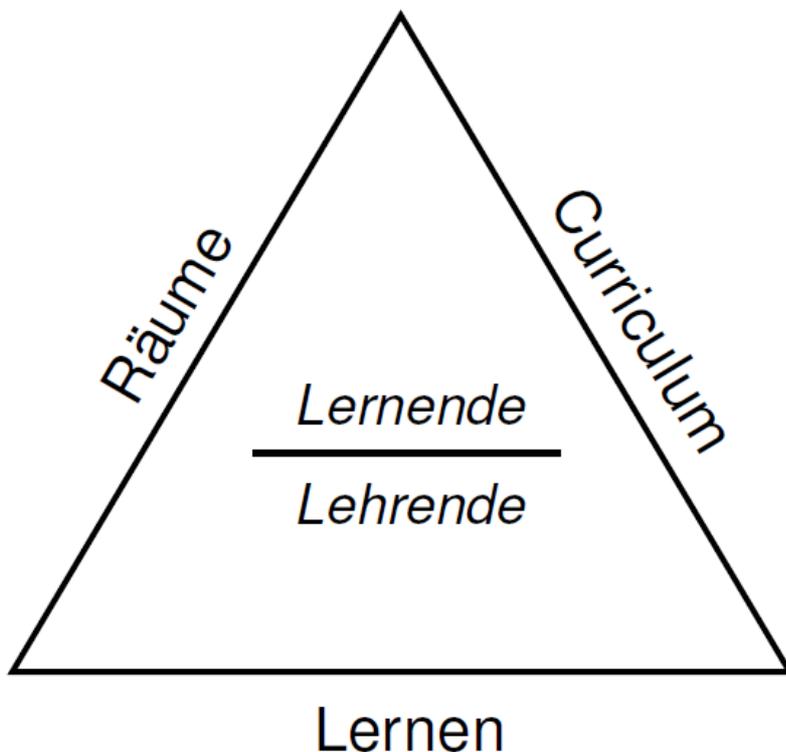


Integrative Model for Nurturing Talent (Fischer, 2008)

Talent development requires specific training for teachers and other staff members. That training will be oriented on the findings of international research, including research into education psychology.

## **5.2 Curriculum – Learning – Settings**

Pedagogical endeavours at Neue Schule Wolfsburg will transpire in the context of a three-way component mix comprising curriculum, learning and settings. They will all apply as much to the teachers as they will to the students – with teachers of course required to engage in an on-going course of continued training and on-the-job learning. The special concept of Neue Schule Wolfsburg entails systemic interrelations between all three components as illustrated below. For example, the curriculum will be influenced, not least, by forms of learning and learning results, just as the curriculum will in turn provide orientation for the definition of learning arrangements. For its part, the special design of the classrooms in the school building will have bearing on the curriculum and on how students learn (and vice versa). Neue Schule Wolfsburg will set out to define and adopt a specific concept for the interplay of these three components.



## ***Curriculum***

The school's curriculum will be based on specific pedagogical principles, with as much emphasis placed on exploratory learning in science and technology fields as on knowledge orientation in an international context. Creative art and design is a comparatively important learning field, as are the fields of culture and media, music and physical education. Close collaboration with places of learning outside the school (with Volkswagen in particular) will add supplementary value to the school's curriculum and lastingly benefit educational pursuits.

At this school, learning competencies will be indigenously developed in children starting in the very first year, with distinctions made from the outset. Development will transpire in the aforesaid learning fields, all of which make accommodations for multiple skills and talents.

## ***Learning***

Autonomous, proactive learning in which students assume a measure of accountability for their personal progress in all five learning fields, from the first to the final year, is one of the key characteristics that will define the learning process at Neue Schule Wolfsburg. Other schools apply these principles too. The difference is that Neue Schule Wolfsburg will not only systematically incorporate these guiding principles into "personal learning plans" for its students but also apply them more profoundly in all learning fields as part of multiple-month keynote projects and in theme profiles across the entire spectrum of subjects.

Learning arrangements will therefore need to be strongly in accordance with these principles. That entails, most particularly, employing open forms of learning and organising mixed-age lessons. The teaching staff will be specifically primed and trained to operate within this concept, with the orientation on individual interests and strengths being an indicator of the quality of the architecture of learning arrangements, the calibre of which is further substantiated by a system of quality assurance.

Student heterogeneity at the school – one of its most distinctive traits – will call for learning situations which are as supportive as they are challenging. Teachers will be specifically primed, trained and their qualifications periodically updated to keep their knowledge base and skills abreast of all relevant developments. The pedagogical diagnostics which this school will employ are a fundamental instrument for the definition of all its teaching and learning processes and will constitute the basis for a professional educational approach to dealing with heterogeneity. The teaching staff will comprise members who possess core competencies in the practical theory and application of modern methods of educational diagnostics and learning coaching. The objects of such diagnostics will include general and subject-related learning competency, giftedness, the analysis of learning biographies and learning processes.

Value awareness and appreciation of the global imperative in education will play key roles in providing individual ideological orientation and a framework for social conduct.

Education practises at Neue Schule Wolfsburg will be aimed at pursuing sustainability. Neue Schule Wolfsburg defines itself as a school in the region, but also as a school in the world. The school's perspective on circumstances and developments in the world will be determined by a systemic approach that considers natural and human systems to be interlocked. Educational practises at the school will be designed to achieve knowledge integration.

## **Settings**

Students at Neue Schule Wolfsburg will take their lessons in a variety of settings within the school building and its surrounds. Classrooms will be designed to act as “third parties” in the teaching concept, with architectural and interior characteristics adding to the quality of the education received in them. The following is a list of the various spaces required to establish a highly creative, performance-nurturing learning environment, and to be set up in separately and, for reasons of funding viability, consecutively organised phases (phases I through III, as indicated):

### *On premises*

- classrooms (I)
- subject rooms and study rooms (I)
- workshops and laboratories (I)
- theatre room (I)
- rest areas (I)
- teachers’ work zones with individual work places (I)
- canteen and cafeteria (I)
- playground and “outdoor” learning settings (I)
- studios (II)
- media library (II)
- film and sound studio (II)
- music, sports and exercise areas (II)
- team and meeting rooms (II)
- library (II) and homework areas (III)
- learning forum (III)
- seminar rooms (III)

## *Off premises*

- local centres of art and culture (e.g. phaeno Science Centre, Arts Museum, Theatre, Planetarium)
- Volkswagen plant
- Autostadt
- other local businesses
- local associations
- non-school experts
- regional colleges and universities
- co-operation with other education facilities

## **5.3 Curriculum Development**

The school will formulate an independent curriculum that will allow for incorporation of the State of Lower Saxony's educational expectations and the core curricula it prescribes. The school curriculum will be centred on theoretically and practically founded pedagogical principles (Hameyer 2009) which subscribe to a view of the individual as detailed below (see "Attitude towards the Individual"). It will be up to the school administrators to work hand-in-hand with the teaching staff to supplement, adapt and define the subtleties of the applied principles and views on the individual so as to exploit the specific conditions afforded by its location.

### ***Principles***

- receiving an education
- developing interests
- expressing particular gifts and talents
- taking an exploratory approach
- working independently

- acquiring learning competency
- engaging in argumentative discourse
- implementing own creative ideas
- caring about others
- exercising mindfulness of others
- pursuing self-efficacy in learning

### ***Attitude towards the Individual***

Dialogue and school democracy, communication and feedback, argumentative exchange and collaboration are all requisite basic elements within the various areas of school practise in the context of operations which are based on the aforesaid pedagogical principles. The following systematic reference points used to outline the individual as perceived in our context are understood to be strictly that: reference points. The school administrators, faculty, co-operation partners and students will undertake to map out a more specific and appropriate definition with the help of research insights. That process will include establishing bridges to practical application. The subscribed-to view will see the individual as

- a seeker of meaning and expression
- informed and knowledge-seeking
- an analytical explorer and independent operator
- caring and charitable
- inventive and constructive
- work-driven and economically minded
- with cultural and ecological interests
- creative and physically active
- loving and supportive

## ***Learning Fields***

This notion of the individual will be adopted in various learning fields, including

- internationality and languages
- science, technology and mathematics
- arts and culture, media and design, music and physical education
- economic, spatial and social sciences

The formal criteria issued by the Conference of Education Ministers and the State of Lower Saxony will be incorporable into these learning fields. The curriculum of Neue Schule Wolfsburg will comprise theme lines which imaginarily cross the school subjects and study projects transversely and which will be specifically set out in a portfolio of themes. Within the scope of a spiral curriculum, these theme lines may recur at different junctures throughout a student's school years, becoming increasingly concrete over time as they are dealt with at ever more complex levels all the way to ultimate excellence. The advantage of using theme lines is that they enable the attainment of knowledge and the accompanying development of competency to be an augmentative, branched-out and consolidative process spanning multiple school years. Theme lines also ensure that fundamental correlations prevail between education and learning in learning fields, school subjects and projects. Examples of the types of theme lines which may be incorporated in Neue Schule Wolfsburg's spiral curriculum:

- world historical
- aesthetic
- technical, constructive
- ecological
- ethic-existential
- health-specific

## ***Curriculum Design***

The school curriculum will comprise newly developed as well as adapted components. Scientifically supervised curriculum workshops will aid the design process. Ultimately, the school's curriculum will be at the very heart of Neue Schule Wolfsburg's pedagogical endeavours and its internal and external communications.

Given its international focus, the school's curriculum will be receptive to stimulus from other countries – via partner schools, for example, or international networks of schools such as those at the 51 sites around the globe where VW operates, or as a result of information sharing and international co-operations or participation in multinational projects or observer exchange programmes.

The curriculum will be founded on multiple pillars, including, most importantly, theme lines, modular curriculum building blocks and study projects. Modular building blocks will provide a diversity of possible choices and combinations. Learning projects may be subject-supplementary or cross subject lines and may comprise learning phases spanning several months.

## ***Curriculum Workshops***

Neue Schule Wolfsburg will receive development assistance from support organisations and curriculum specialists. Curriculum workshops will address topics such as

- teaching learning competencies
- setting up learning workshops and establishing self-learning times
- developing self-learning material
- self-reflection and feedback (including portfolio)
- development-support distinctions between boys and girls

- multimedia ratios and realising them
- modular learning systems
- differential learning arrangements
- individual learning coaching
- comprehensibility of the curriculum  
(for students, parents, school partners)

#### **5.4 Curricular Framework of Neue Schule Wolfsburg**

The following practises shall be subscribed to across the entire course of school years 1 to 13:

- Continual, diagnosis-aided learning support and performance development
- End-to-end individual talent and skills development
- Consecutive establishment of elementary cultural techniques for everyone (reading, spelling, mathematical skills)
- Systematic building of learning competencies right from the start independent, self-managed learning, co-determination of the curriculum, etc.)
- Democratic learning (student councils, dispute mediators, rituals, accountability, etc.)
- Exploratory learning from year 1 onward (connectivity to secondary I level)
- Spiral curriculum from year 1 onward (e.g. science and technology, design and media, internationality and languages)
- Age-appropriate time structures (for the school day/week/year)

In terms of content, the programme of Neue Schule Wolfsburg will be based on the core curricula and supplemented chiefly in those areas which constitute the school's particular focus. It will satisfy the requirements as prescribed by the education standards issued by the Conference of Education Ministers as well as

requirements for the total number of lessons per school subject or subject field as set out in the decrees on “Primary School Operations” (decree by the Ministry of Education, dated 3.2.2004) and “Operations in the School Years 5 to 10” (decree by the Ministry of Education, dated 3.2.2004).

### ***5.5 Educational Specifics of the Primary School***

The points referred to in Item 5.4, above, alone make the primary school for which authorisation is herewith sought a special proposition. The following aspects serve to further underscore the special educational nature of the school, especially given the breadth and concentration of this concept:

- It will enable new, and individualised, forms of learning such as “personal study plans” and exploratory learning right from year 1. The intended focus on science and technology is worth special mention in this respect. With its objective to incorporate science theory and technical practise and an emphasis on the reciprocity thereof into the curriculum from year 1 onward, Neue Schule Wolfsburg will be breaking new educational ground.
- Individualised learning will transpire in heterogenic age groups as deemed necessary from a pedagogical perspective.
- The concept of a spiral curriculum will be adopted right from year 1.
- Cross-school staffing, at least at the junction between years 4 and 5, will provide a particularly valuable form of support for students making the transition from the primary to the secondary-level years.
- The incorporation of older students into cross-pollination efforts between the primary and secondary levels will additionally facilitate such efforts while also affording those older students new avenues of development.
- Operation of the primary school as a school with all-day compulsory attendance for all students will provide a greater range of options for study groups as well as enabling daily, weekly or annual rhythms to be more strongly aligned to the needs of the students than is normally the case.
- A greater scope of assignment for teaching staff will enable particularly strong individual support for students.
- The focus on “internationality” from year 1 will see the school formulating an appropriately extensive spectrum of language and culture offerings, including a programme of bilingual learning phases.

- The school landscape in Wolfsburg and the regional influence of Volkswagen as a globally operating corporation require that a flexible education offering be provided for expatriate children, for example, who transfer into and out of the school community at different times throughout the school year.
- An offering of the school subject of German as a foreign language is important especially for this student group.

## **5.6 School Certificates**

Students at Neue Schule Wolfsburg will be able to acquire any of the general education certificates laid down in the education law for the State of Lower Saxony. That includes all secondary level-I certificates as well as advanced technical certificates and general tertiary-entrance qualification upon completing years 12 or 13. Neue Schule Wolfsburg will seek to introduce a system of dual qualification attainable in a collaborative programme of general and vocational education for secondary level-II certification – most particularly in technical fields.

In addition to offering conventional foreign-language certificates, issued upon the successful completion of examinations conducted by a foreign institute (in business English, for example), Neue Schule Wolfsburg will be exploring the possibility of eventually including an IB (International Baccalaureate) and/or an AP (the US Advanced Placement degree) in its programme of international examinations.

These decisions will need to be taken in final form at a later point in time when developments at the school have progressed somewhat. To begin with, bilingual elements in different languages will be incorporated into lessons in such a way as to not only make international examinations possible, but to actively pursue them.