

Vinge Holistic School



This new holistic school in Denmark, is under construction and will open for enrolment sign-ups during the Spring of 2017.

The school will open in August 2018 in the village called 'Vinge' south of Frederikssund (<http://www.byenvinge.dk>).

Children of all ages starting from 5 years(turning six the same year) and upwards can sign up.

This document is a current view of the process, and will emerge along with our school building process.

Vision of the School



To create a school that goes beyond just being a typical school; we are creating a school that is an extended part of the family and one that makes you a part of a bigger community both locally and globally. Imagine a place where each child will learn to feel safe and will love being a part of it, these circumstances will create a unique special environment where they will not only get the learning they need to enjoy their childhood, but also at the same time gain the right tools to be able to manage the ever-changing society and an unknown future.

We focus on 'the now' and timeless universal principles which will give each child a strong inner foundation to thrive in all kind of outer circumstances, a school where we focus on implementing all the best from the educational system and the business industries to ensure that every child will blossom, thrive and develop their individual potential.

The foundation of the school

The foundation of the school will be what we call "friendship groups", so instead of creating a school based on normal classes, every student will be connected in a "friendship group" with approximately 7-9 kids where they start and end the day. The groups will form the foundation of a strong culture of friendships that will ensure high well-being/welfare, connectedness and a strong community.

The rest of the teaching will more or less be divided according to their age. All students will have a mentor and will be a mentor him/herself.

We are creating a sustainable and partly international school, where the students learn that they are connected with each other, the nature and their surroundings.

80% of the teaching will be based on projects/project-based and the students will along the way gain the skills to learn and share as they also teach each other and become better themselves. English and physical activities will be the core teaching structure, the way we teach and the physical spaces are modified and adapted to address different learning styles.

Entrepreneurship will also be a part of the daily life and will especially be a big part of the everyday school life of the more mature children. We will aim not to focus on traditional teaching but lean towards a more holistic approach instead, a place where music, mathematics and physical activities can and will be combined

The outdoor nature of the school and of the community will be included in the children's daily life as they will take part in growing the plants of the school and take care of the school's animals. We will be outside as much as possible and use the nature as part of the natural teaching tool.

Fundamental Values / Principles:

- ★ You are worthy exactly as the person you are
- ★ Whatever I give out is what I will get in return. A 'win win win' mentality
- ★ Everybody is unique and endlessly valuable
- ★ To make mistakes is a part of learning and a very valuable lesson.
- ★ PLAY. When both grown-ups and children play we release our creativity and energy.
- ★ Flow, the now, presence and intuition is a part of our teaching methods.
- ★ Everybody creates their own reality, which is very important to realize and at the same time understand how it can affect each other in a positive or negative way.
- ★ We believe in learning by doing, passing on knowledge and trying out theory in praxis.
- ★ Another belief is oneness – we are all connected with each other and nature and everything we do has an effect on each other.
- ★ We practice self-respect and respect for each other. An example is that stop ALWAYS means stop.

A Global School:



The school emphasizes on being globally oriented and building friendships across cultures and countries which is why families every year from January to March will have the opportunity to swap houses and schools with other families from our sister-communities around the world.

The school is Danish, but has an international flavour, hence English will be used on a daily basis so that the children can become fluent in English as early as possible. Thus, we will be able to introduce more of the educational materials in English. From January to March, the school becomes international, when all subjects are taught in English and there is help available for everyone who needs it. Extra assistants are taken on during these months and there are families to offer billeting for exchange students from within our sister communities around the world.

We will continue to build a collaboration with more friendship schools around the world.

It is our desire that our children will be able communicate with others around the world and gain insight into other cultures and traditions

At the same time we want to create a school that can make a stand in the world as an example of what is possible with these new values and furthermore one that will inspire existing schools to make changes, last but not least we would like to be an innovator and kick-off to many new schools around the world.

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Being A HOLISTIC School:



“Educating the MIND without educating the Heart, is no education at all” - unknown

We focus on nurturing the children **mentally, physically, spiritually** and **emotionally** on an everyday basis.

These areas will here be explained, since all aspects are very important themes and is the mere foundation of our definition of a HOLISTIC School. We aim to be continually up to date and open in this approach as we build and conduct the school:

- **Mentally:** Cognitive training using books, films/video clips, stories/myths, numbers, visualisations/imagery, mental training; “I can do it, I want to do it and I am going to do it” and positive thinking etc. The cognitive training is a person's ability to understand, see and recognize coherence and situations.
- **Physically:** The body was created to move and when the body is still growing it is extra important to move. In the light of this physical activities will be a daily part of the teaching (curriculum) and every Monday – Thursday yoga is a part of the schedule. We want it to be fun to move and we focus on playing and a freedom in our movements. Hugging and giving each other massages releases endorphins and

prevent bullying, which is why it will be part of the yoga practice, the friendships groups and in other types of teaching.

- **Spiritually:** Our essence is spiritual and eternal. When we feel nurtured on a spiritual level, seen for what we are and are in contact with a deeper self we get more strength, energy and happiness. Life will be more meaningful and we will feel connected with each other and all life that surrounds us. It gives us inner strength and strengthens our intuition and makes us loving, present, creative and intelligent human beings. At the school we will focus that every child will find their spirituality from within and furthermore the answers they seek. We will guide and inspire them without indoctrinating them with our own beliefs, but instead inspire to make them feel and find their own beliefs.

- **Emotionally:** Our feelings are our basic inner compass for what we like and dislike which is why it is important that our children feel confidential with ALL of their emotions. All emotions are allowed, it is just about finding the most beneficial way to express them. Suppressed feelings are adverse and whenever we contradict them they will be even more exigent[PC1] . Children have a natural way of expressing and letting go of their feelings again and moving on. It is this ability we want them to preserve. We learn and experience life through our emotions and no matter what we wish for the future the goal is attached to a feeling. This makes it an important task for us to also inspire and organize the day so that it contains emotional nurturing elements.

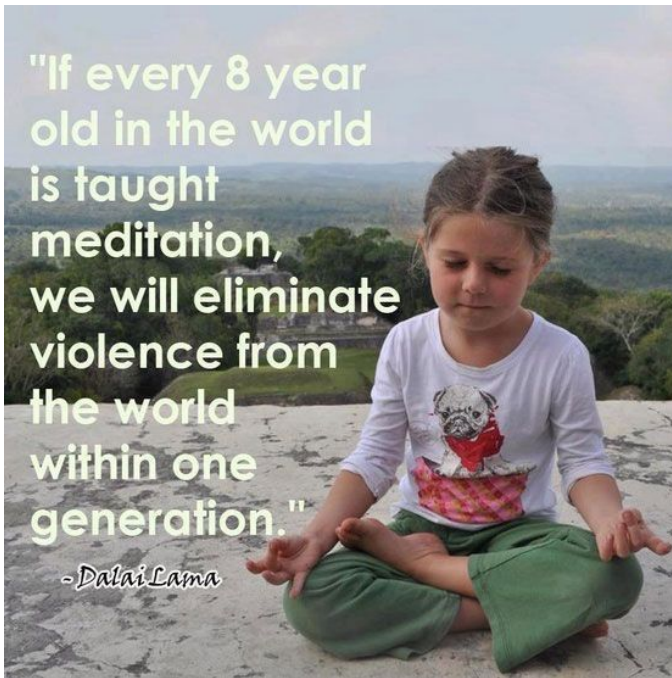
A Sustainable School:



At Vinge Holistic School we focus on sustainability on 3 levels;

1. **Sustainable nature:** The children will learn how everything in nature is connected and is part of a bigger cycle. We will teach them about ecology, healthy living and how to grow vegetables and herbs. The outdoor nature of the school and of the community will be included in the children's daily life as they will take part in growing the plants of the school, learning about permaculture principles and take care of the school's animals. We will be outside as much as possible and use the nature as part of the natural teaching tool.
2. **Social sustainability:** We want to teach the children that we are a part of each other and our actions will affect us all. We learn and practice taking responsibility for individual and common actions to create a nice social community and society. The community will not be sustainable until everybody thrives and takes responsibility for themselves and gives to the community. We will train and develop the art of creating inner and outer peace. Every day we will train "peaceful communication," learning how we can best settle conflicts as a natural part of the day and also as a subject on its own.
3. **Financial sustainability:** The children will learn what creating a healthy and responsible financial situation means – both for themselves and also for each other, the school and the rest of the world. Words such as abundance, transparency, responsibility and 'win win' mentality will be used and we won't focus on 'competitive mentality' because in that case the value and knowledge won't always be passed on to everybody. Learning how to share and create is an important element, so that there will be enough for everybody and that 'more develops into more' is the kind of mentality that we wish to encourage. We want to create a school where the values we create become of use for many other people and at the same time will be a big gain for the school, financially.

Friendship Groups, Council & Heart-Meditation:



The friendships groups will be the pillar of the school's structure, community and culture.

Every student will be part of a friendships group and they will each morning and afternoon meet in a circle where they start and end the day together. A group will contain 7-9 members in the same age range.

We will start the day with a practice of heart meditation and we will sit together and sing a morning song. By sitting in a circle and using a talking stick the children will become successful at listening to each other and expressing themselves in an authentic, brave and honest way, straight from the heart. They will get to know each other in ways that everyday life won't necessarily present and this will help to build up an understanding for each other that will prevent a culture away from bullying and teasing. You can read more about 'way of council' here:

<http://councilinschools.org/who-we-are/>

HeartMath, Heart-meditation and Appreciation:

When we live from the heart, we live in the present and become anchored in our human potential. Living from the heart when you are in school, creates inner peace, helps focus, allows presence, builds self-esteem, prevents bullying and enhances creativity and cognitive processes. At Vinge Lilleskole, one of the most important foundation stones, is for the children to learn who they are, to learn about each other and where they are in the overall scheme of things, by living from the heart.

Being able to master one's own inner state of being and discover a state of heart-coherence by learning together in friendship groups, means the children can discover these simple yet powerful HeartMath techniques to use in their daily lives.

Heart-coherence is a state of being where the heart rhythm forms a balanced and smooth sine wave-like pattern. Physically, almost no energy is wasted because our bodily systems function optimally and produce a synchronization between heart rate, respiratory rate, blood pressure, etc. Among the many benefits of heart-coherence is increased inner-peace and calm, more energy, clearer thinking, an improved immune system and hormonal balance.

In heart-meditation we use the following three steps:

1. Heart focus: (Energy follows attention) Place your right hand on the heart
 2. Heart-breathing: Even in and exhale "through the heart."
 3. Heart-feeling: Steps 1 and 2, and create the feeling of gratitude / appreciation.
- Read more about the heart and HeartMath here <https://www.heartmath.org/about-us/>

It is important that all children get a good start to the day, a start where every child feels listened to and will get the chance to say a positive confirmation for the day; these are things we practice in the circle. We do this to strengthen and focus awareness to help them create their own reality. We talk about the basic values of the school and what they mean to us in our everyday life. At the same time the friendship groups are a place where we touch many difficult subjects and invite all feelings to be a part of the talk, so that we can take care of them and resolve whatever needs resolving. We focus on feeling loved and being able to receive love. In the circle we will also present what will happen in class that day so that every child's expectations are matched and they feel ready to begin the day. It is in these groups that we create a good basis for a heart based friendship culture.

In the afternoon we will end the day in the groups where we will catch up on the day and do a bit of "clean-up" if necessary. We say thank you and focus on good things that the child and other children have done that day, what you are proud of and what you have become better at. We will celebrate both mistakes and successes and look at both as being connected. We say goodbye and shortly mention what is going to happen the following day.

Every Friday the groups will be mixed and there will be a common gathering where the whole school will participate.

Academics, subjects and structure.

The school has a strong focus on structure, transparency, security and a high level of professionalism. At the same time we appreciate and provide space for creativity, flexibility and spontaneity within common norms and values.

Our priority is upon learning through experience, whereas theory and academics fills 10-20% of the syllabus the rest will be through direct experience.

As a free school we live up to and take the responsibility very seriously that the children shall be educated to the highest level. But beyond that, we hope to provide them with skills that will equip them for a fast-changing future which no one can predict and to give them a school they will love as a valuable and enriching part of their childhood.

Entrepreneurship, innovation, projects, travel and creativity will fill much of the time from the biggest down to the smallest.

In the education syllabus, we place great emphasis on motivation. Several studies show that when the child is motivated from within, he or she can learn very quickly. We spend a lot of time in social development and cultivating friendship. Research shows that it's easier to learn when you thrive; conversely, it is very hard to take in new information when contending with any inner conflicts. Therefore, the time spent on creating wellbeing and a sense of community, is not only good for the child, the community and the whole of society, but at the same time also profits in the chance to learn something new.

Reading, writing and arithmetic

Reading, writing and arithmetic will be included within projects in a structured manner. We have set up a research group to investigate different learning methods suitable for combining varying subject-groups within different activities.

Other subjects:

Many subjects will cross over or merge under different themes. For example: Danish; English; writing and mathematics need not stand alone, but can be combined with other subjects such as:

- Music and Song
- Theatre and Film
- Dancing, Acrobatics and Capoeira, Qigong & Aikido
- Art and Design
- Entrepreneurship
- Yoga
- Nature walks and outdoor recreation
- Spirituality, body, mind and spirit
- Sustainability, economic, social and environmental

- Conflict resolution and communication
- Society and the world
- Diet and health

Daily schedule (draft):

08:00 to 08:50: Bus from Copenhagen to Vinge

09.00-09.30: Friendship Groups

09:35 to 10:25: Yoga, parkour, dance or other physical training

10.25 to 10.45: Snacks, fruit, smoothie break

10:45 to 12:30: Mixed-age lessons by theme and level

12:30 to 13:15: Lunch and free time

13:15 to 13:35: The youngest sum up in the friendship groups.

13:15 to 14:15: The older students' lessons

14:15 to 14:35: The older students sum up in the friendship groups.

Every Friday there is mixed friendship groups and joint assembly for the whole school. On trips out of the house taken over lunch possible. with, so you can be for example that from 10:40 to 13:15 pm

The teachers and facilitators:

There are very high standards for our teachers, while at the same time there is freedom within the syllabus framework for them to develop their own style. They must be creative in finding new ways of teaching in regard to ensuring that each child learns to read and write when that child is ready. That goes for all subjects, as well as for English.

All the School's teachers must practice Heart-Meditation daily. They must be authentic and be role models for the students. Vinge Lilleskole staff are invited to share their own stories and show how they are on a journey that never ends and that happiness is not a goal but a condition inherent to us all.

Teachers must be open, clear-spoken and mature and conscious of their responsibilities.

Teacher-student relationships are based on equality, where the teacher uses his role to create a friendly and loving relationship with the individual child.

In this manner, we require an approach that is not authoritarian, but promotes equality, where the teachers acknowledge and are aware of their own authority and power and so use it lovingly with open-ness and dignity.

There is a staff meeting every week where the teachers are given time to support each other. Using the same format as the students, they meet 'in the heart' in a circle with a 'discussion point' that is passed around. At Vinge Lilleskole we practice presenting a positive view of each student; we talk about their strengths, qualities and challenges. Teachers also practice both giving and receiving feedback from each other.

In addition, each month there is a theme for the whole school, a theme which is for both the children and the adults.

Parental Participation and volunteers:

A fundamental element of the school is to promote a good cooperation with parents and parents are invited to volunteer their time at least ten days of the year at the school. In addition, it is expected that parents take the time to attend courses and to familiarize themselves with the month's theme. Information material is sent out to the parents and courses, lectures and workshops are run throughout the year.

Volunteers:

The school provides opportunities for volunteers coming from all over the world. We will gladly accept volunteers who can help in the kitchen-garden, in the kitchen, or cleaning and with the children's activities.

School Fund:

We are setting up a school fund with the intention of, among other things, providing lower income families the chance to send their children to the school. In addition, the fund could help these families to travel to at least one of our sister communities.

Location

Frederikssund municipality is creating a new sustainable city area. You can read more about the plans here: <http://www.byenvinge.dk>. The new school will be situated in part of the area, called Vinge. (Wing) It is here that we will build "CirkelBo" a sustainable, Heart-spirituality based Eco-Village of townhouses grouped into a large circle around a central, communal geodesic glass roofed atrium.

It is anticipated that with many families moving into the sustainable city area, there will be about 200 new children potentially attending the Vinge Lilleskole during 2018-2020.