

# What is Associative Leadership?

Rudolf Steiner left no template for the organisation of Waldorf schools. Like the curriculum, his indications on the governance and management of the schools were just that: suggestions for development. Much was left to the initiative and endeavour of the evolving group of teachers. Since then the social and political space we all have to occupy has become, like the planet itself, complicatedly crowded and self-polluting. Legislation, regulation and expectation pour into the social environment, often contradictory and often with unsustainable results.

Associative Leadership builds on best practice in Steiner Waldorf collegial management and governance. It provides those who take part in

the workshops with thinking tools and increased awareness of what colleagues need to consider in school organisation. It recognises there is no one model, but aims to enable the greatest clarity as to where responsibilities rest and how appropriate accountability can be built into the structure. The workshops address each level of the school organisation from constitution and ethos to planning meetings and making sustainable decisions.

During the past 7 years this approach has been increasingly and usefully applied to a number of member schools and Early Years' settings. Associative Leadership has been principally carried forward by Jonathan Wolf-Phillips under the auspices and with support from the

Steiner Waldorf Advisory Service. In addition, the "toolkit" involved has found its way into the Steiner classrooms by way of an innovative Waldorf "citizenship curriculum" (see Sarah-Jo Robinson's article, Active Citizenship, summer 2007) and into 2 maintained Secondary schools, one of which applied as a result and has been accepted as an SWSF "Affiliate" organisation.

Workshops on Associative Leadership, Peer Mentoring and Appraisal are available via the Steiner Waldorf Advisory Service. Jonathan also offers one-to-one workshops for Time and Workflow Management. This has been shown to especially benefit young people who have particular difficulty in organising themselves.

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## HANDS-ON AT NATIONAL TEACHERS' CONFERENCE

They started their day with song and then turned their hands to ancient art, puppets and iron smithing. 130 Steiner Teachers from across the UK were attending their National Conference at The Ringwood Waldorf School. In partnership with the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship, the school organised and hosted this prestigious 4 day event for the first time.

Keynote speakers and best-selling Steiner authors had travelled from across the globe to share ideas and know-how integral to Waldorf Steiner education. Teachers took the opportunity to further develop their skills, choosing from more than ten practical workshops held mornings and afternoons covering areas including green woodworking, chemistry, handcrafts, dance, and using masks in drama.

"This is the major annual conference for Steiner education in the UK, and we are honoured to host it this year," said Christine Polyblank, press spokesman for the school. "Steiner teachers see this as part of their career development and eagerly take part in the training workshops. They are looking for meaning and truth in what they do."

The school in Folly Farm Lane was only able to host the conference following the opening in 2006 of a £720,000 hall complex, thanks in great portion to energetic parental fund-raising. It makes Ringwood the only new purpose built Steiner school in the UK. The new complex contains a hall, theatre space, movement and green rooms, kitchen, staff room and administrative offices.

LOUISE ISAACS -  
RINGWOOD WALDORF SCHOOL

## BOOK REVIEW: 'Developing the emotionally literate school'

"Our society has traditionally been frightened of emotion, but now we are realising its importance." The author certainly feels passionately about the importance of the feeling realm as a mediator between our abilities to think and to act in the world. She sets out clearly in this book the definition of terms and the ingredients that can lead a school towards becoming an emotionally intelligent community.

League tables put all the emphasis on academic achievement. At the same time it is less and less possible for state schools to exclude pupils who display difficult behaviour. So on the one hand, schools are pushed to focus on attaining the highest academic goals, while on the other hand these same schools must also find ways to live and work with pupils who spend their days disrupting that aim for whole classes as well as themselves. Thus there are many schools and local authorities now developing a warm interest in 'emotional literacy'.

What has this to do with Steiner education? The Waldorf curriculum is designed to support the emotional life of the child as much as any other aspect. However, of course, all teachers know that disruptive behaviour is a challenge. Although this book looks primarily at English state primary and secondary schools' work in this area, with some interesting references to international research, there is plenty in here for Steiner Waldorf schools too.

Early in the book there is a useful definition of emotional literacy;- "The ability to understand ourselves and other people and in particular to be aware of, understand and use information about the emotional states of ourselves and others with competence. It includes the ability to understand, express and manage our own emotions and respond to the emotions of

others, in ways that are helpful to ourselves and others." We can all agree with these abilities as educational priorities.

There is much evidence in the book, as well as our own common sense, that links competence in emotional literacy with learning. A positive emotional state is a pre-requisite for learning. She acknowledges that learning is a 'whole body' as well as a 'whole brain' experience, influenced by many things including the appropriate physical environment (the importance of the child's sensory experience is acknowledged with a plaintive reference to the smell of "rank boys' toilets" that will strike a chord with any teacher).

Positive self regard and empathy are the building block for all social competencies and they require positive action in order to flourish. A person's behaviour has meaning and the picture painted of the distinction between the 'troublesome child' and the 'troubled child', is one we could all take to heart. The call is for emotional literacy to be integrated into the curriculum so that its values, attitudes and skills can be centrally alive in the learning community for the benefit of all.

This is a book by an academic whose crusade is to bring emotional literacy in a holistic way into every curriculum and into the ethos of every school. It must be part not only of the children's learning but of the staff's too. Bringing fresh impetus for emotional literacy into a school (or even a local authority) must start at the top and involve everyone. It needs to be built into organisational structure as well as the curriculum.

"An emotionally literate school is a great deal more than 'warm and fuzzy'." The clarity and consistency advocated in this book are reflected in its style. Any one of us working within the Steiner Waldorf sphere will find it of interest and use.

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# Newsletter

## SUMMER 2008

## STATE RECOGNITION FOR STEINER SCHOOLS IN IRELAND

Cooleenbridge School (as it was then called) was founded in November 1986 and the first application to the Department of Education and Science for recognition was made in 1990. On 5th. February this year the Minister for Education granted recognition to Raheen Wood School (as it is now) which, from September 2008, will be called Raheen Wood Steiner National School. The second Steiner School in Co.Clare, Mol an Óige School, was granted recognition at the same time. The two schools have worked closely together, sharing expertise and experience to reach this point where both schools now form part of the 'recognised' sector, thus providing a choice to parents in Co.Clare on a basis of equality with all other National Schools.

In Ireland it is schools that are recognised not educational approaches, and the two key criteria for recognition are the qualification/recognition of teachers and the Primary School Curriculum. In 1997 the High

Court determined that it was reasonable for the state to expect that teachers in a Steiner school should be qualified at the same level as teachers in other recognised schools i.e. Bachelor of Education (Honours) degree and we have undertaken to employ such teachers in the recognised schools. The Primary School Curriculum was fully revised in 1998 and is written as a series of general and specific aims none of which present any difficulty for a Steiner school. The bulk of the document is a presentation of how the curriculum could be delivered and both schools and teachers are encouraged throughout to adopt a flexible and creative approach.

We informed the Department that we would be adopting a 'Steiner Approach' to the curriculum and described six key characteristics of this approach. Most of these characteristics are aspired to in the Department's own curriculum. We deal with the aspiration for the 'Integration of Curricular Material' by describing the Main Lesson and we have much experience of how to

respond to the wish for less reliance on text books by using Main Lesson books. Other characteristics of the 'Steiner Approach' such as the close relationship between school and home and the emphasis on oracy in the early years are aspects of good practice acknowledged in the national curriculum. There will be points of tension such as the expectation of the use of information technology throughout the school and the requirement for a school principal, however each school can develop its own policies in these areas with the backing of parents and each will present a creative and innovative response to the authorities. We are aware that compromises will be made in dealing directly with the State but no more, perhaps, than we have been making over the years in schools that have become inaccessible to parents on moderate incomes.

PEARSE O SHIEL - RAHEEN WOOD  
STEINER NATIONAL SCHOOL.

## WOW-DAY PROJECT FOR CHECHEN CHILDREN

Three years ago we met Malik and Hadizat Gataeva for the first time. They came to our ECSWE "On the Edge" conference in Norway on the problem of evil in our time and they told us their story. They have taken care of orphans from the Chechen wars since 1994 and from then onwards almost one hundred children have lived in safety in their home. Now their "family" consists of 23 children in Kaunas in Lithuania and about 20 children in Grozny. Hadizat courageously travels between the two all the time.

Hearing this we knew we just had to do something so we made it into a WOW-day project. Since then we have managed to buy a house in Kaunas and send them 1000 euros every month. All this money comes from the WOW-day activities of the European Waldorf pupils.

It is encouraging to see how the children are developing; they go to school, have learned Lithuanian and one of them has even started studying in the university.

When I was in Kaunas in the summer of 2006 together with three pupils from my school in Tonsberg, we met another Norwegian there. It turned out to be the internationally famous writer Åsne Seierstad, the author famous internationally for the books "The Bookseller in Kabul" and "A Hundred Days in Bagdad". She was planning a book about Chechen children who suffered from the war. We had to keep it a secret because she was planning to go to Chechnya to see the situation there and as it

was not allowed and highly dangerous for journalists to go there, she had to be very careful. We therefore kept the secret for one year and in November 2007 the book was published in Norway and in March 2008 in the UK. Now it is also being published in many other countries and people can read about the children in Grozny and "the angel in Grozny" who is, in fact, our friend Hadizat Gataeva.

For the sake of the children it is important it is that we keep on with this project and we still have to collect some money to fully pay back the debt we have incurred for the house. Then we have to renovate the house and keep the children in school. This will take work for at least another ten years and we need help in this. Like all our WOW projects we can help children have better lives than would otherwise be possible for them.

ASTRID BJØNNES - NORWAY  
For more information look under Activities:  
WOW on www.ecswe.net



# A NEW CURRICULUM FOR SCOTLAND – Changing Curricula/When is a Curriculum not a Curriculum?

Curriculum reviews seem to be all the rage at the moment. Following swiftly on the heels of the interim report of the independent Primary Review in February came an announcement from the House of Commons Children, Schools and Families Committee that they are embarking on an enquiry into the future of the National Curriculum itself—and with an agenda that will question its very existence.

The Primary Review, which is based at the University of Cambridge, is due to deliver its final report in October. But a reticent government is already attempting to distance itself from the results. One finding from the interim report indicates that primary school children in England are among the most tested in the western world, while a separate study from the National Foundation for Educational Research published at around the same time suggests that starting school as young as the age of four may be 'stressful' for children.

Both findings should come as no surprise to us. However it is gratifying to note that the Primary Review, which is headed by an international team of professors of education, explicitly commends 'educational alternatives, including Steiner-Waldorf schools' for producing 'better academic success'.

It is tempting, of course, to nod sagely and pity those schools where teachers must comply with every whim of the Government's national 'drive for standards'; after all, we're not really affected—our schools commence formal education at the much more sensible age of six-and-a-half, and testing in lower schools is kept to a minimum. However, we should not be complacent. From October this year, Steiner early years providers in England will need to be aware of the new Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which, ostensibly at least, would seem to require kindergartens to introduce the basics of literacy and numeracy.

Naturally, a great many parents and early years' practitioners are deeply concerned about the EYFS and its potential to undermine the integrity of the Waldorf curriculum. However, at the time of writing we are confident that kindergartens will not be expected to teach reading, writing and maths. Indeed, in an answer to a parliamentary question tabled on behalf of the SWSF by David Drew MP, Education Minister Beverley Hughes pointed out that: "The EYFS is a broad framework which does not prescribe any particular teaching approach and as such it has the flexibility to accommodate a wide range of philosophies and practices." She has also given reassurances to the SWSF (see article by Janni Nicol).

Therefore the EYFS is a framework, not a curriculum. It is more a set of guidelines, albeit a set of guidelines which, we can be sure, OFSTED and the other inspectorates will refer to during their visits. Yet, when we think about it, kindergartens are already laying the

foundations of basic literacy and numeracy. Eurythmy introduces the forms of words, as well as the sounds; while storytelling and ring time lays the foundations for an understanding of phonetics and narrative structure. And nobody can deny the use of quantities, weights, measures and numbers in baking or gardening.

I believe that Steiner schools are already fulfilling many of the requirements of the EYFS, and I also believe that as evidence from a growing number of sources continues to force national curricula and other educational frameworks to evolve, the philosophical gap between Waldorf and conventional education will continue to close.

This gap is—ironically perhaps—closing most quickly in Scotland. The irony emerges because, of all the legislative bodies responsible for education in the British Isles, the Scottish Government has until recently seemed the least likely to entertain the notion of state-funded Steiner schools. Nevertheless, and without compromising our curriculum in any way, Scottish Steiner schools are increasingly being lauded as examples of good practice; models for conventional schools to learn from.

At the heart of this sea-change in attitude lies Scotland's new Curriculum for Excellence: a curriculum equivalent to, but very different from, England's National Curriculum. The Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) was announced back in 2005 and will be implemented in September this year. Unlike the National Curriculum, CfE is openly 'holistic' and attaches importance to 'values', as opposed to content-based syllabuses. Indeed, CfE prescribes almost no content at all for teachers or college lecturers. Instead, it expects the education of all children and young adults to be guided in future by a combination of four 'dimensions': effective contributors, confident individuals, successful learners and responsible citizens. And the Scottish Government has illustrated the 'outcomes' associated with each dimension. For example a 'responsible citizen' is someone who can develop 'informed and ethical views', while a 'confident individual' can 'achieve success in different areas of activity', and an 'effective contributor' is someone who is 'self-reliant'.

What is patently obvious to Scottish Steiner teachers is that practically everything they do contributes to one of the curriculum's four dimensions. Seasonal festivals, for example, are sure to encourage 'responsible citizenship'. The completion of main lesson books inspires 'successful learning', because it requires what CfE calls 'a determination to reach high standards of achievement'. Even the Class 8 project gets a look in, since it requires 'effective contributions' from 'confident individuals'. This is not rocket science. During a recent HMIE inspection at the Edinburgh Rudolf Steiner School we decided to refer to CfE as much as

possible, in an effort to communicate the principles of Waldorf education—a strategy which seemed to work well.

What has surprised me, however, is just how worried many conventional teachers and lecturers are becoming about exactly how they should implement the new curriculum. Having for so many years been told what they must do, they are now perturbed by the amount of freedom they are soon to enjoy.

Earlier this year a public body called the Scottish Further Education Unit invited me to deliver a workshop to illustrate CfE in practice. The beneficiaries of this workshop were a group of curriculum managers from a cross-section of Scottish further education colleges, many of whom were at a loss as to how to adapt their courses to ensure their students achieved 'confidence' and 'responsibility'. Among my advice was the suggestion that they introduce cross-curricular elements similar to those that might be found in main lessons: recitation, for example, in a media studies course; movement and poetry during a physics lecture; art among a nursing practicum. Their response was commendably (or politely) enthusiastic, but they had one collective rejoinder: 'It's all right for you. In your school you can do all these wonderful things, but we've got targets to meet and syllabuses to cover!' Quite.

And this is why the Scottish examination board, the SQA, is due to begin a wholesale review—and revision—of Scottish qualifications, and their prescriptive syllabuses, in order that they may reflect and be consistent with the momentum of CfE: a move that should allow a greater measure of freedom and creativity into exam courses.

So things are changing, and for the better. It might not always seem like it, but slowly and surely, and without Steiner schools having to compromise their own unique set of educational principles, curricula throughout Britain are moving inexorably closer to our own.

ALISTAIR PUGH –  
RUDOLF STEINER SCHOOL OF EDINBURGH

## NEWS

The next European Council for Steiner Waldorf Education Quality Care conference will take place in Budapest on the 19th and 20th September.

The programme is available on [www.ecswe.net](http://www.ecswe.net)

In the UK the next Alliance for Childhood one day workshop will be in London on the 18th November.

More information is to be found on [www.alliancechildhood.org](http://www.alliancechildhood.org)



## ELIANT – Why should we care?

What is the European Citizens' Initiative? What is ELIANT? Why is this important? What is so special about 1 million signatures?

If you weren't able to tick all the boxes, here are the answers. The European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) was proposed in the Reform Treaty for the European Constitution—'Citizen Power beyond the Nation State'. It gives ordinary citizens influence over European policy-making and legislation, without the need to gain the support of MPs or MEPs for instance: any initiative backed up by 1 million signatures across a significant number of countries, would have the right formally to be heard in Brussels. This citizen involvement is enshrined in the 'Lisbon Treaty', due finally to be ratified by member states on 1st January 2009.

So why is this important? As Christopher Clouder explained in his article in the Spring 2007 Newsletter, ELIANT (the European Alliance for Initiatives for Applied Anthroposophy) was formed in 2006; their Campaign is to ensure legal safeguards for anthroposophic initiatives in Europe. In other words freedom to choose, whether it be education, medicine or agriculture, for everyone. On a wider level this ensures the human rights and freedoms which otherwise could be subsumed by regulation and bureaucracy. Did you know, for example, about

the compulsory vitamin supplementation of infant foods or the withholding of permits for anthroposophic medicines?

ELIANT aims to ensure the goal of 1 million signatures by the end of 2008. This will mean that its aim to establish a 'legal basis for cultural diversity in the fields of education, agriculture and medicine' will be fulfilled and will have to be heard in Brussels. Other pilot-style ECIs already have collected and have delivered their million signatures to the EU Commission. The progress towards this magic number so far for ELIANT is 366,955, of which Great Britain has contributed a mere 7,590 – 7th in the Signature League tables!(for a complete analysis go to [www.eliant.eu](http://www.eliant.eu)). There are approximately 5000 children enrolled in Steiner Waldorf schools in Great Britain: we parents have exercised our freedom of choice. Now our signatures and those of our friends could make a difference to others. We can, for instance, put up a poster, collect signatures or just add our own.

June 7th 2008 is World ELIANT Day, the aim of which is to collect signatures in the streets of every large city in Europe and in the world.

If you would like to get involved with the Eliant Campaign visit [www.eliantaction.com](http://www.eliantaction.com) or e mail [info@eliantaction.com](mailto:info@eliantaction.com).

VIVIEN BAPAT – SWSF Office

Although the EU, as an institution, has no direct responsibility for educational policies in the member states there is growing indirect influence that has been accelerated by the Lisbon process. The Council of Ministers meets regularly and, through a process of benchmarking, peer-review and sharing of good practice, there is a tendency for a particular idea relating to educational practice or policy to appear in various countries simultaneously, and a drift towards discrete and informal harmonisation. The European Commission has developed many programmes within their competences of extra measures beyond those provided by the member countries themselves, and these have been used effectively over the years by Waldorf schools. Now however the EU is moving into new territory through the mutual recognition of qualifications and their latest initiative in the field of children's rights.

The danger is a future consolidation which could detrimentally affect parental right of choice, in the same way that we have seen in the medical and agricultural sectors. To prevent this we need a stronger voice in Brussels, and this can be done by the creation of platforms that have enough baseline support to be taken seriously. ECSWE already participates in a number of these and represents the schools' movement in the ELIANT Alliance.

CHRISTOPHER CLOUDER –  
EUROPEAN COUNCIL FOR STEINER WALDORF  
EDUCATION

## LATEST INFORMATION ON THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE (EYFS)

### Implications for Steiner Waldorf Early Childhood Settings

In February the SWSF wrote to the Minister Beverley Hughes, asking for exemptions for 'whole settings' (kindergartens) from the EYFS Learning and Development (L&D) requirements, and at the same time we asked for detailed explanation on how we could work within the EYFS should we not get these whole setting exemptions. It is an area that has been engaging us for over a year now. Her reply is reassuring. She clearly states that 'the EYFS as a framework has the flexibility to accommodate a diverse range of approaches' and she recognises the Steiner phase of childhood being from birth to seven, among many other positive statements.

Over the past few weeks many schools, kindergartens and parents have written to their local MP's on the potential restrictions which the EYFS learning and development requirements might impose on the kindergartens' practice, and at the same time asked the MP's to visit their kindergartens. On the invitation of the Minister, many of the MP's with Steiner schools in their constituencies met with her, and were

reassured that 'the Steiner early childhood settings would not be expected to compromise their distinctive educational practice'.

So it looks as if we are nearly at the point now where our position would be safeguarded and have been reassured by the DCSF (Department for Children, Schools and Families) that Ofsted/HMI inspectors and Local Authority advisors will be fully informed of the Steiner educational principles and practice in relation to the EYFS. If and when this is the case there should be no need for individual parent exemption from the L&D requirements as kindergartens will not need to compromise (although parents can always write for exemptions if they wish on behalf of their own children). It will not be clear until the regulation is laid whether exempt children will be able to access the funding.

### Assesment/Foundation Stage Profile

We are waiting to address this issue once we have the reassurances we seek on the EYFS L&D section. Assessment is already statutory in law, so we need to find a different approach, and the SWSF are organising a meeting of Steiner kindergarten teachers to



Finding frogs at NLRSS

discuss the assessment requirements in relation to their own practice.

The Department are also interested in how our kindergarten teachers assess/observe children, and have funded research into this via the Hereford Academy together with Plymouth University and other academics. This, and the cross-over document that the DCSF will fund enabling outside agencies to understand and interpret Steiner early childhood practice will provide further clarity. Training for OFSTED/HMI inspectors is already underway.

We are impressed with the attention paid to our circumstances by the DCSF, and are grateful that the good relations which have been built over the years that have enabled the SWSF to have open and positive discussions with them over this issue.

JANNI NICOL –  
SWSF Early Childhood Representative