Many people would say that our good intentions.

The people making these attacks are obsession and trawl the internet and comparatively few in number but they are making your blood run cold; such is their make-up that approaching the child in this way is motivating, competent, responsible and better academic achievement by the children added.

The Marcelino Botin Foundation commissioned the survey as a result of its work with schools in the Spanish region of Cantabria, where it was developing new ways of education. “It wanted to know what was happening outside the province and thought it should look around the world to find out where experience has been built up,” Clouder explains. The contact with Clouder was established through a parent at one of the Madrid Waldorf schools which led to him presenting a proposal to the Foundation: “I did explain I was a Waldorf teacher, not a professor, but they said that’s what we want, we want it based in the classroom, we want it very practical, what can be done, what is the experience, what has happened in these schools, how can we inspire others and learn ourselves to approach the children in a better way”.

The 300-page study has initially been published in Spanish and English and is aimed at policy-makers and practitioners. Clouder stresses that it is intended to bring about change and not just to be another purely academic exercise “not just another report to go on another shelf”.

“It is very readable, describes visits to schools, the reactions of the children, what we’ve seen. It aims to inspire people to approach mainstream education in a new way and bridge the gap between approaches such as the Waldorf schools and the mainstream,” Clouder said.

Now that the study has been published, the Foundation is busy distributing the book to educational administrators, think tanks, politicians and journalists throughout Europe.

Christopher Clouder is already thinking ahead: “There are all kinds of ideas, but I would like to set up a sort of think tank, an independent international platform to explore innovative and creative education based on this report. For the full report see www.socialandemotionaleducation.org

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STEINER ACADEMY HEREFORD

...at those in the midst of this step change to an Academy, it can feel like the changes are taking a rather long time to fall into place. Yet, it seems unlikely that the changes will be complete in the near future. Bearing in mind how recent that phase of uncertainty was, it is quite remarkable that the Steiner Academy has already started its second year. It seems to be going very well, even if the building works are causing lots of mud and an incredible shortage of space whilst some of the children who are old is removed to make way for the new. Also old systems for how things have been done are being removed to make way for the new and this too, in the words of Alison Gober, the Chair of the College of teachers, feels like "wading in mud" at times. She explains how "We found ourselves returning from this summer holidays to a new and unfamiliar incarnation of our school. The school we returned to looked the same. But we knew it was different. We knew that, as a state school, there would be certain new requirements. We do not fully understand what improvement requires resources. We do not have and there are still areas where it is really difficult to reach clarity. We are trying to pick our way through them as stronger and more beautiful school is devised and in the meantime we need your positive thoughts and support."

From the point of view of others, the benefits have been quite clear. There are many both in this country and further afield who regard the Steiner Academy as having potential to enhance the educational landscape of this country. They are excited by the new possibilities that children have created for the children in Herefordshire and beyond. For example, Claire Hanbury Leu, Director of the Child-to-Child Trust and closely associated with University of London’s Institute of Education, is impressed by the significance of what has been achieved by the Founding Group in negotiating state funding for the Steiner curriculum. In her view, "the fact that the Steiner Academy can achieve the effective development of literacy. Work is underway to provide increased resources for class teachers embarking on the this with the SWSF."

In the meantime we need your positive thoughts and support."

ZYLA SILAN - SWSF

EASTER CONFERENCE

This year’s Easter Conference for Teachers, with the theme of “World Wide Waldorf”, will be held from April 5-9 at the Rudolf Steiner School, Kings Langley. Speakers include Virginia Sease, from the Vorstand at Dornach, who will share her perspectives on three lectures on this destiny of the Waldorf movement in the world. Frederique Robert, newly appointed principal of the Steiner Academy Hereford, talking about the school’s journey from private to public independence, and Christopher Clouder, of the SWSF and ECSWE, speaking about the international context and challenges. There will be a range of themed discussions, artistic activities, workshops and presentations and a performance by the Northern Foundation Stone Eurythmy Group.

Recent records show that between 2002 and 2008 we have contributed £12,042 to WOW. We are proud to have helped the projects WOW supports and we have had a lot of fun on the way.

HELEN MACKULL

YORK STEINER SCHOOL

For more information about WOW, that over the last 10 years has raised 1,200,000 euros for children all over the world see www.ecswe.org

CYCLING THE SOLAR SYSTEM

For many years now, almost since WOW Day started, York Steiner School has been raising about £200 by doing a whole school sponsored cycle ride at midsummer. In 2008 we made £2490. We are very fortunate that the Selby Cycle Way which follows a disused railway line starts close to school and only crosses one road. The route is very safe and level, passing through fields and only crossing twice, at each end. In the next few years there is a scale model of the solar system, so we can measure the distance traveled by whether we made it to Jupiter, Pluto, or even beyond to Selby!

Our annual ride has become an important school tradition and we really miss it when for instance the river floods are so deep and flooding the bridge across that the children look forward to the ride and enjoy extending the distance they mananage yeah year. Class One usually do a walk instead and Class Eight generally go right into Selby (13 miles ) to have well earned fish and chips.

State primary school is enthused by Steiner Waldorf gymnastics

For teachers and pupils alike, it was indeed a positive experience for one state school primary teacher that she immediately resolved to take Steiner Waldorf gymnastics into the classroom in exactly the same way the school’s pupils do.

The teachers appreciated the way the games and stories were chosen to suit the needs of their age groups. The teachers were amazed at the involvement of some of their more challenging pupils. A girl who suffers from weight problems suddenly began moving around in an unselfconsciously way; an SEN child became totally caught up in his lesson. A quiet child opened up. One year 5 student declared: “he was the best PE teacher I have ever had.”

For teachers and pupils alike, it was indeed a very rewarding day.

CHRISTIAN LEXIN, COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER, MICHAEL HALL SCHOOL

SWSF and ECSWE, speaking about the international context and challenges. There will be a range of themed discussions, artistic activities, workshops and presentations and a performance by the Northern Foundation Stone Eurythmy Group.

This is a new group run by parents, for parents, which aims to support them on their journey through Steiner Waldorf education. Be there at the outset on the shape this group into a resource for all. In this spirit we encourage you, when replying, to let us know what you would like to see included in the programme for the day. Lunch and refreshments will be provided by Martin Baker’s Pitta. Free Biki can be provided for Friday and/or Saturday night for those travelling a long distance.

The formation of this new group has been actively supported by the SWSF and we have invited Christopher Clouder (Chief Executive, SWSF) and Jeremy Smith (Communications Officer for SWSF and parent) to join us for the day.

For replies or further information: Christian Lexin phone 01724 827919 or e-mail christian.lexin@micahall.co.uk

UK Parent network

UK Parent Network is delighted to invite you to their inaugural meeting on SATURDAY 14TH MARCH, 09:30 – 17:00 at Michael Hall School in Sussex

Join us to share your thoughts and experiences of the Steiner Waldorf parent in 21st Century Britain.

For further information or to make suggestions for improvement, contact: swas@steineralumni.org or see http://www.steineralumni.org

KEVIN AVINSON - SWSF

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