Waldorf
Learning
Foundation

Strategic Plan 2024-26

Welcome

Dear friends and colleagues,

We are delighted to be able to now share the fruits of a strategic review which we undertook over the Autumn of 2023 following the sale of the school site and looking forwards to the charity's long-term planning.

This next year sees the charity taking its first formal steps towards diversifying its work beyond providing further teacher education with Bath Spa University, to include school provision planning, consultancy, research, and resource development as part of our remit.

We will be working with a wide range of partners in an equally wide range of contexts and, where able, will share our contributions as they are either agreed with those partners or begin to bear fruit.

We will continue to update our wider communities through our newsletters and on our website, through which we will share our evolving work.

Sincerely,

Paul Hougham
(CEO)

Nic Hailey CMG
(Chair of Trustees)

November 2023

championing creative pedagogies

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centred on children's wellbeing

Who we are

Waldorf Learning Foundation is a charity, rooted in Rudolf Steiner's innovative insights into healthy child development, focused on educating the whole child. A Waldorf Education is holistic, addressing head, hand, and heart, and is centred on each child's academic, social, moral, and creative potential and growth.

Steiner's insights inspire but do not constrain us: we seek to draw on the very best educational practices that prepare students for the world of tomorrow. We seek to build an education for, and accessible to, students from all backgrounds. We are committed to education founded on integrity, creativity, excellence, and openness, which fosters rounded, free-thinking, open and resilient people who make a valuable contribution to their communities and the world.

Our lineage (read more here) as a charity first dedicated to education inspired by Rudolf Steiner's insights reaches back to 1937 and spans 80 years offering all-through holistic, integrated provision. Our future direction (read more here) seeks again to encompass school provision alongside a range of other projects which aim to progress and further professionalise Waldorf Education as a reputable creative pedagogy with a meaningful contribution to children's lives.

Our purpose and vision

Our vision is that high-quality, professional, and progressive Waldorf and Waldorf-inspired education is available to children across the UK, attracting students from all backgrounds, and with an increasing range of provision that is free at the point of use.

Our purpose is to support professional, progressive, and excellent Waldorf education in the United Kingdom and globally. To deliver this purpose, we will

1 Work towards the establishment of a Waldorf school

which is free to access, delivers high-quality, professional, and progressive education to a diverse student body, and is engaged with its local community.

2 Support Waldorf education in the UK and globally, through

- The provision of high-quality teacher education in Waldorf and Creative Pedagogies.
- Engaging in research, knowledge dissemination and dialogues that deepen the practice and understanding of Waldorf and wider creative education approaches.
- Specific support for schools which share the principles and values set out in this Strategy.

Our values

Our values as a charity give our work meaning and purpose. They underpin the way we interact and how we progress our overall vision.

We describe our values through the following six themes:

PROFESSIONALISM

We are committed to a modern Waldorf education founded on integrity, creativity, excellence of provision, and openness, integrated and fully engaged with the wider collective of creative pedagogies worldwide.

FUTURE-ORIENTED

We are committed to education founded on healthy child development, one which fosters rounded, free-thinking, open and resilient people who make a valuable contribution to their communities and the world.

HOLISTIC

We are committed to the integrated development and learning of head, hand and heart, of the whole child including the cognitive, affective and kinaesthetic, and each child's academic, social, moral and creative potential and growth.

INCLUSION

We will build an education for, and within reach of, all students. We strongly reject the outdated and imperialist elements of Steiner's writings and will contribute to renewing Waldorf education based on anti-racism, social and ecological justice, and embracing neurodiversity.

PRAGMATIC

We will continue to engage in our own ongoing renewal as a charity, prudently stewarding the resources available to us and engaging with energy and ambition to deliver our purpose and deliver meaningful and practical results.

RESPECT

Steiner's insights inspire but do not constrain us: we seek to draw on the very best educational practices that prepare students for the world. We work with individuals and communities in cultivating the tools of self-reflection and response-able capacities for participation and learning in an ever-changing world.

History and context

In 1937, a group of people from around the UK came together to found a charity in Whaddon, on the road from Stroud to Gloucester,

> "..to provide for and conduct the education of children in accordance with the principles and methods enunciated by Rudolf Steiner; to establish and carry on (whether in accordance with the said principles and methods or otherwise), public or private schools or colleges for the teaching, instruction, assistance or advice of the young and persons of all ages and for the training of teachers, whether such teachers and persons are connected with the Association or not; [...and] to promote and carry on meetings, study groups, conferences, lectures, concerts, displays, exhibitions and, musical and dramatic performances and by the circulation of information to invite and encourage public interest in and support of the Association and public interest in and concerning the educational and other teachings of Rudolf Steiner."

For over 80 years, Wynstones school educated generations of children. Generations of its alumni have gone on to flourish and contribute deeply to their communities and the world. The generosity of the bequests made at the school's founding in 1937 helped sustain that proud and long record.

Wynstones closed in 2020, and it became clear that the conditions were not in place for a successful reopening, not least from the impact of the Covid pandemic, but also due to the need for more progress in raising the standards of provision, teacher training and professionalism generally, and the alignment of demand and economic capacity. We have worked since then to put the Charity on a sustainable financial footing, culminating in the sale of the Wynstones site in August 2023, and to prepare the ground for it to contribute to new paths of teaching and learning, for the children, parents/guardians, teachers, and communities of today.

Our future direction

Our work to renew our mission reflects the changing conditions in education and the need for a modern Waldorf Education offering that is integrated, and fully engaged with, the wider collective of creative pedagogies worldwide that serve children's healthy development. This takes place within a global context of educational systems, communities and cultures of learning undergoing intense transformations including, but not limited to, questions around social and ecological justice.

Teaching and learning are often at the heart of cultural and social change and need to be closely aligned with educational research as we collectively navigate cultural values and political currents. The first ten years of the 21st century saw a 'creative decade' of policy and practice in the UK, heralded by Sir Ken Robinson, who in his celebrated TED talk of 2006 laid down the provocative gauntlet of "Do schools kill creativity?" Whilst 'creative thinking skills' are now integrated into the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)'s 2021 framework, creativity itself has a far wider potential within education. Finland, which for many years has served as a beacon for high levels of training and trust in teachers as professionals, demonstrates how it is the cultural coherence and embedding of evidence-based educational policy that has a significant impact on children's outcomes.

Amidst the industrial model of mainstream education systems, a vibrant discourse on creativity is continuing to offer a potential renewal of education itself, and alternative models such as Waldorf Education, alongside Montessori and Reggio Emilia, are contributing to this discourse.

There are a range of exemplary Waldorf settings worldwide serving their communities within varied contexts of formal education systems, regulatory infrastructures, and economic frameworks. In the UK, Waldorf Education provision is predominantly independent and fee-paying and underwent a particularly challenging period over 2018-2020 with several schools (including Wynstones) closing due to inadequacies across all areas of provision. The reasons for these failures are complex, but at their heart were a failure to sufficiently engage with the highest professional and regulatory standards; a lack of long-term investment in teacher standards, and leadership and governance; and challenges to the financial sustainability of the fee-paying school model, that sought to serve a socially- and economically diverse pupil and parent community.

Since 2019, Waldorf UK (until October 2023 the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship), has been working systematically to support the professionalisation of the Waldorf

sector in the UK with a significant milestone achieved in 2020 in the publication of the Waldorf Teachers' Standards. Waldorf UK's programme of school improvement has been accompanied by better Ofsted ratings in many schools, but the long-term lack of quality assurance in Waldorf teacher training programmes has been a significant gap in the sector and constrained recruitment and succession planning for schools.

Waldorf Learning Foundation's principal work as a charity over these past two years has been the development of a partnership with Bath Spa University culminating in the Postgraduate Diploma in Waldorf Education and Creative Pedagogies. This course was the first to receive accreditation from Waldorf UK (in 2022) and so become both an academically validated and professionally accredited programme. The course is for qualified teachers to develop their practice, including through the demonstration of the Waldorf Teachers' Standards. It has an innovative online and residential design, including Landcraft Retreats in rural Herefordshire. The course remains a keystone of the charity's commitment to the sector and the establishment of a future school provision as part of its future direction.

The Charity holds a determination to engage with this future direction with energy and ambition, and to deliver our purpose and work towards the vision it has set out.

We must, and will, prudently steward the resources available to us and ensure that they are focused in the best possible ways on delivering the charity's objects. Subject to investment conditions we aim to fund the core operating costs of the charity from investment return, while using our capital resources prudently to achieve strategic priorities. Our strategic goals set out these priorities over the next three years.

capability, capacity and regulatory resilience

Strategic goals, strategies and outcomes

To support Waldorf Education in the UK to thrive in the way our vision sets out, we see the following conditions as necessary:

- ✓ skilled teachers,
- ✓ strong leadership and governance,
- ✓ accessibility of provision, and
- ✓ political and economic confidence based on high standards.

We will contribute to these conditions by setting the following goals:

1

We aim to enable as many young people as possible to have access to quality Waldorf Education, including in the Gloucestershire area where our charity is rooted. Our long-term aim is to establish a state-funded Waldorf school. As we work towards this, we seek also to improve the overall conditions for Waldorf Education in the UK to flourish.

2

We aim to contribute to high standards of teacher education, teaching and learning in UK Waldorf schools and beyond.

3

We aim to support a high level of regulatory resilience within Waldorf settings in the UK, and collaborative discourse in promoting and supporting high-quality Waldorf provision and principles which champion neurodiversity and social and ecological justice.

high-quality Waldorf Education

4

We aim to contribute to the recognition of, and collaboration with, Waldorf pedagogy within the wider education sector in the UK, including as a long-term pioneer in sensorimotor integration, storytelling, and intercultural competencies within developmentally coherent curricula.

5

We aim to work collaboratively, responsibly, and transparently with a range of organisations towards the accountability, openness and participation of Waldorf Education within a wider field of social development and learning, recognising the leadership of Waldorf UK as the national representative and professional body in the UK, and supporting their professionalisation of the sector.

Theory of change 2024-2026

	WHAT WE DO	OUR OUTCOMES		LONG TERM OUTCOMES
FUTURE SCHOOL	We work with stakeholders to create the conditions for a future school	We aim to establish a high-quality state-funded Waldorf school	ACCOUNTABILITY LINE	We want to see the very best of Waldorf Education, which is inclusive, accessible, and sustainable
TEACHER EDUCATION	We provide courses including co-delivering the PG Dip with Bath Spa University	We aim to contribute to raising the standards of teaching and learning in UK Waldorf schools & beyond		We want to see teachers bringing Waldorf Education to increasing numbers of children and contributing to educational futures
BEST PRACITCE	We provide consultancy to schools, teachers & community groups	We aim to support high levels of capability, capacity & regulatory resilience for Waldorf settings		We want to see the sustainability of Waldorf schools championing creative pedagogies and social & ecological justice with curricula inclusive at their core
RESEARCH & PUBLICATION	We support research and researchers, translate terms, and pioneer projects	We aim to contribute to the collaboration of Waldorf pedagogy within the wider education sector		We want to see the wide understanding and application of Waldorf principles across a range of educational settings and learning communities
PROJECTS	We develop resources with a range of partners to support ongoing professionalisation	We work towards the openness of Waldorf Education within wider fields of social development		We want to see a community of practice within Waldorf Education centred on children's well-being, and committed to inclusion & criticality

How these strategic goals can support the conditions required for Waldorf Education to thrive is set out below as we clearly illustrate the changes we want to see (our objectives), and what we will do to facilitate those changes (our strategies).

Future school

- We aim to enable as many young people as possible to have access to quality Waldorf Education, including in the Gloucestershire area where our Charity is rooted. Our long-term aim is to establish a state-funded Waldorf school. As we work towards this, we seek also to improve the overall conditions for Waldorf Education in the UK to flourish.
- We will do this by working both directly towards it and on the wider conditions necessary for it to succeed, specifically by contributing to quality assurance in the sector, establishing dialogues with relevant stakeholders, and supporting early years' Waldorf provision as part of preparing the ground.
- We want to see the opening of an education provision showcasing the very best of Waldorf education and complementary practices, which is inclusive, accessible, and sustainable, demonstrating excellence in child-centred, developmentally coherent, holistic, and integrated provision.

Teacher education

- We aim to contribute to raising the standards of teaching and learning in UK Waldorf schools and beyond.
- We will do this by sustaining our commitment to the core contribution of the Postgraduate Diploma in Waldorf Education and Creative Pedagogies (PG Dip) co-delivered with Bath Spa University, as well as offering a range of programmes and projects which progress the practice and provision of Waldorf Education in the UK in alignment with our values. These will include but not be limited to; courses, inset days, conferences and teaching resources.
- We want to see the graduation of highly trained Waldorf teachers in the UK as part of a cohort of practitioners ready to bring Waldorf Education to increasing numbers of children and contribute to the academic and professional discourse on educational futures.

Strong, progressive schools

- We aim to support a high level of regulatory resilience for Waldorf settings in the UK, and collaborative discourse in promoting and supporting high-quality Waldorf provision and principles which champion neurodiversity and social and ecological justice.
- We will do this by working with schools, teachers, and community groups towards a shared understanding of best practices in child-centred, developmentally coherent, holistic, and integrated provision. This will include but not be limited to; courses, inset days, conferences and teaching resources, and consultancy and other bespoke support.
- We want to see as standard a high level of capability and capacity within schools to support and maintain good practice in teaching and learning, and leadership and governance. We want to see the sustainability of Waldorf schools throughout the UK and beyond as part of a new wave of modelling best practices in creative pedagogies, neurodiversity and social and ecological justice.

Research, Reputation, and Integration

- We aim to contribute to the recognition of, and collaboration with, Waldorf pedagogy within the wider education sector in the UK, including as a long-term pioneer of sensorimotor integration, storytelling, and intercultural competencies within developmentally coherent curricula.
- We will do this by engaging in and supporting research, knowledge dissemination and dialogues that deepen the practice and understanding of Waldorf Education. This will include support for graduates of the PG Dip to share their work in professional and academic journals and sustaining a discipline of translating the terminology used within Waldorf Education into universal academic and everyday language (an accessible tri-lingual approach).
- We want to see the wide understanding and application of Waldorf principles across a range of educational settings and learning communities, primarily in the UK, primarily in schools.

A strong community of practice

- We aim to work collaboratively, responsibly, and transparently with a range of organisations towards the accountability, openness, and participation of Waldorf Education within a wider field of social development and learning, recognising the leadership of Waldorf UK as the national representative and professional body in the UK, and supporting their professionalisation of the sector.
- We will do this through the dedicated work of our core team, supported by our Board of Trustees, in partnership and association with a range of practitioners and partners, including Waldorf UK, to support the ongoing professionalisation of the sector. This will include but not be limited to, the promotion of research and publication in Waldorf Education, participation in conferences, and contribution to shared projects and the development of resources for students, teachers, and school leaders.
- We want to see a collaborative and coherent community of practice within the Waldorf Education sector in the UK that holds a cultural vigilance of standards and values centred on children's wellbeing, alongside a commitment to diversity, criticality (considered reflection and analysis within complex contexts) and collaboration to drive and sustain excellence. We want our strategic planning to be vigilant and agile, robust, and sustainable, with our projects clear and accountable whilst responding flexibly to changing conditions, and care for our communities.

wider fields of social development

Waldorf Learning Foundation

Help shape the dialogue

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