

# SCHOOL INSPECTION SERVICE

*Independent professional inspection of schools affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust, schools accredited as members of the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship, and those schools belonging to the Cognita Group which are not members of the Independent Schools Council and its constituent associations*

## INSPECTION REPORT

**INSPECTION CARRIED OUT ACCORDING TO SECTION 162A  
OF THE EDUCATION ACT 2002**

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| <b>Name of school:</b>      | Wynstones School  |
| <b>DfE number:</b>          | 916/6031  |
| <b>Inspection team:</b>     | <b>Reporting Inspector:</b><br>Mr Mike Thirkell<br><br><b>Supporting Inspectors:</b><br>Mrs Jane Cooper<br>Mr Tony Hubbard<br>Dr Martin Bradley<br><br><b>Lay Inspector:</b><br>Mrs Sally Jenkinson |
| <b>Dates of inspection:</b> | 2 to 4 December 2014  |

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## SCHOOL DETAILS

|   |   |            |
|---|---|------------|
| Name of school:   | Wynstones Steiner Waldorf School                          |            |
| Address of school:  | Church Lane,<br>Whaddon,<br>Gloucester, GL4 0UF           |            |
| Telephone number:   | 01452 429220  |            |
| Fax number:   | 01452 429221  |            |
| Email address:  | college@wynstones.com                                     |            |
| Chair of the College of Teachers:                             | Ms Penelope Johnstone                                     |            |
| Chair of the Trustees:  | Mr Dick Baker   |            |
| Administrator:  | Mr Albert Loddo   |            |
| DfE number:   | 916/6031  |            |
| Type of school:   | Independent school associated with the Steiner Fellowship |            |
| Age range of pupils and students:                             | 3 to 19   |            |
| Gender of pupils:   | Male and female   |            |
| Total number on roll: (Full-time)                             | Boys: 118   | Girls: 134 |
| Number of children under 5:                                   | Boys: 11  | Girls: 15  |
| Number of post-16 students:                                   | Boys: 0   | Girls: 7   |
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational need: | Boys: 0   | Girls: 0   |
| Annual fees:  | £2,557 to £8,671  |            |
| Type of inspection:   | Section 162A of the Education Act 2002                    |            |
| Inspection Team:  |   |            |
| Reporting Inspector:  | Mr Mike Thirkell  |            |
| Supporting Inspectors:  | Mrs Jane Cooper<br>Mr Tony Hubbard<br>Dr Martin Bradley   |            |
| Lay Inspector:  | Mrs Sally Jenkinson                                       |            |
| Dates of inspection:  | 2 to 4 December 2014                                      |            |

## SECTION A: INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

### Purpose and scope of the inspection:

This inspection was carried out by the School Inspection Service in accordance with Section 162(A) (1)(b) of the Education Act 2002, and it follows the inspection framework laid down by the Service and the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship and agreed with the Department for Education (DfE). It was conducted by independent professional inspectors, who looked at all aspects of the school's provision as required by the current regulations. The professional inspectors were accompanied by a trained lay inspector, who looked at agreed aspects of the school's management and ethos and reported on these to the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship. The lay inspector's findings are summarised in Section C of this document, but this section is not a statutory part of the inspection process.

### Information about the school:

Wynstones Steiner Waldorf School is situated in a rural location south of Gloucester. The school was founded in 1937 and provides education based on the Steiner Waldorf curriculum alongside GCSE and Advanced level courses in the upper school. A total of 268 pupils currently attend the school between the ages of three and eighteen, including twenty-six below compulsory school age in the Kindergarten and seven girls above compulsory school age in the sixth form. There are no pupils who have statements of special educational needs, although the school identifies forty-six pupils as requiring support for varying degrees of learning difficulty, such as dyslexia. A further fifty-seven pupils are recorded as being either gifted or talented. The school has links with other Steiner Waldorf schools in Europe and the school population includes twelve German pupils. Support for pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) is provided as necessary. The school was last inspected in November 2009.

| <b>Steiner class names</b> | <b>National Curriculum</b> |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Kindergarten               | Nursery, Year R, Year 1    |
| Class 1                    | Year 2                     |
| Class 2                    | Year 3                     |
| Class 3                    | Year 4                     |
| Class 4                    | Year 5                     |
| Class 5                    | Year 6                     |
| Class 6                    | Year 7                     |
| Class 7                    | Year 8                     |
| Class 8                    | Year 9                     |
| Class 9                    | Year 10                    |
| Class 10                   | Year 11                    |
| Class 11                   | Year 12                    |
| Class 12                   | Year 13                    |

## **Summary of main findings:**

The school has maintained the standards identified in the last report and is making further improvements in a number of areas. It is successful in meeting its aim of *'supporting children's intellectual, spiritual, emotional and practical development'*. It provides overall a high quality of education. The quality and standards of the Kindergarten, curriculum, teaching and assessment are all good, with some outstanding features in each. A high number of the lessons observed throughout the school were of excellent quality. Pupils of all ages make good progress relative to their abilities. Provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and their behaviour is good. Pupils are well cared for and strategies for safeguarding are secure, including for the small number of boarders. Policies and procedures that support pupils' welfare, health and safety are good and are implemented well. The school meets all but one of the regulations for registration as an independent school.

## **What the school does well:**

- its educational provision and the quality of support pupils receive ensure that they develop as independent and confident individuals;
- the creative curriculum continues to be strong, including the provision for music and the expressive arts;
- relationships between teachers and pupils are very positive and make an important contribution to the pupils' academic and personal development; and
- support for pupils identified as having special educational needs is outstanding.

## **What the school must do to comply with the regulations:**

- ensure that all parts of the school site that are accessible to pupils and that present a potential hazard are clear of rubble.

## **What the school must do to comply with the Equality Act 2010:**

- the school complies with all aspects of the Equality Act.

## **Next Steps:**

Whilst not required by the regulations, the school might consider the following points for development:

- complete developments in the school's central records relating to monitoring and assessment and secure greater consistency in teachers' practice in maintaining individual records of pupils' progress; and
- ensure greater consistency in the quality of teachers' planning to reflect the most effective existing practice.

## **SECTION B: COMPLIANCE WITH REGULATIONS FOR REGISTRATION**

### **PART 1 - The quality of education provided by the school**

#### **The quality of the curriculum**

The quality of the curriculum is good and has been maintained and developed since the last inspection. It has some outstanding features, which include the identification of and support for pupils with special educational needs, its provision for the expressive arts and the links that are made between subjects and topics in the curriculum. It follows the Steiner Waldorf principles in focusing on a single two-hour Main Lesson, followed by individual lessons in more specialised subjects, such as modern foreign languages. In accordance with Steiner Waldorf principles of child development, the introduction of formal writing and reading begins in Class 1.

The curriculum is broad and balanced. It blends pupils' personal, social, intellectual and physical development well. At all stages of compulsory education, pupils experience all the required elements of education, including the linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative. The school is aware that pupils' experience of information and communication technology (ICT) is restricted, particularly in the lower school, and has firm plans to increase the use of computers. The provision for the development of literacy enables pupils to have caught up with nationally expected levels by the beginning of Class 6 and is of a high standard. A programme of personal, social and health education is embedded in the Main Lesson. All pupils study history, geography, religion physical education, eurythmy, art and handwork. In addition, almost all study German from the Kindergarten and German and French from Class 1.

In Classes 9 and 10 all pupils continue to study mathematics, English language and literature, science, art and design and one modern foreign language. The school has introduced a new GCSE expressive arts course, designed to integrate theatre and other art forms, which all pupils study in Class 9 and may choose to continue to GCSE. Pupils can choose to study music, a second modern foreign language, Latin or history. For the sixth form the school strikes a good balance between optional and common elements. All students maintain contact with science, mathematics, drama, literature and the expressive and creative arts in a challenging way. For example, a very effective course in avant garde twentieth century art and literature included Dadaism, the Theatre of the Absurd and authors such as Franz Kafka, Samuel Beckett and James Joyce. Pupils have a good range of GCE Advanced level options for the small size of the school. These include the three sciences, mathematics, English literature, history, French, German, 3D art and design, fine art, music, performing arts and psychology.

Aesthetic and creative development is a strength of the curriculum. Younger pupils' drawings and illustrations in their Main Lesson books are an eloquent expression of their understanding of the stories they experience. From an early age they produce high-quality objects in wool, clay and wood, and in Class 8 they are forging iron implements followed by work in copper and silver. Most pupils study a musical instrument and at every stage participate in a choir or orchestra, occasionally performing in public in cathedrals of the West Country.

Support for pupils with special educational needs is outstanding. Each main section of the school has a well-qualified co-ordinator. They share a learning support assistant (LSA). They operate a rigorous system for regular screening of pupils and are in the process of enabling teachers to be more fully engaged in this process through internal professional development. On the basis of the tests and of teacher or parent information they prepare clear and helpful individual education plans, which are fully used by teachers in the classes. They have strong links with outside experts, such as educational psychologists. Highly able pupils are well supported by their teachers, and the school has established a list of able and gifted pupils. Guidance for pupils in the classroom both by LSAs and the teachers is sensitive and skilful. The school provides good support for pupils speaking a home language other than English.

The curriculum is strongly supported by a wide range of educational and other visits. The curriculum prepares pupils well for their future study and adult lives. Appropriate arrangements exist to prepare pupils for university entrance and for work, through class guardians. All pupils have a week's work experience in Class 9, and write reflectively about these experiences and what they have learned. Some pupils say that they feel that the process of preparation and guidance could be clearer and the school recognises that it needs to bring together and monitor the different elements. The curriculum is generally well managed. A strength in the school is the willingness of staff to reflect upon and challenge their own practice and traditions. For example, in seeking to broaden the provision in the sixth form they are reviewing the content and purpose of the Main Lesson at this stage to reduce the possibility of unnecessary duplication. They have also recognised a need to set the long and medium term planning of Main Lessons and subjects onto a more consistent basis to make the monitoring of breadth and coverage easier.

### **The quality of teaching and assessment**

The quality of teaching is good and it has a significant number of outstanding features. A high number of the lessons seen were of excellent quality. No lessons were less than satisfactory. The high quality of teaching ensures that pupils have good opportunities to acquire new knowledge and to make good progress according to their ages and abilities and to learn a wide range of skills in the subjects taught. The range of subject knowledge and the age-related expertise of teaching staff provide a rich resource for ensuring that pupils have numerous opportunities to apply intellectual, physical and creative effort through their work.

Relationships between teachers and pupils are very positive and a strong support to the progress made by pupils in their intellectual development. Teachers often demonstrate an infectious enthusiasm for their subjects as demonstrated in music lessons in general and through the high standards achieved by the upper school choir. Pupils confirm that they feel well supported and receive additional guidance whenever it is needed. The majority of lessons are organised well to support learning, for example to facilitate group work or support the engagement of individual pupils. An Advanced level English Literature lesson observed in Class 12 was conducted as a seminar which enabled the teacher to support the pupils in developing an understanding of the text and its underlying meanings through mature dialogue. Teachers frequently make links between different parts of the curriculum, for example in a mathematics lesson seen in Class 6 when learning about percentages was linked to economic issues; in eurythmy in Class 3 and games in

Class 5, mythical tales relevant to the ages of the pupils were used to heighten and excite pupils' engagement in the activity and stimulate their imagination.

Teachers generally plan their lessons well. The best lessons are carefully structured to ensure that good use is made of the available time and that learning takes place at a good pace. The best planning builds effectively on previous learning and pupils are made aware of how the work will be developed in future lessons. Planning usually includes reference to the learning needs of individual pupils, including those identified as gifted or talented. The careful structuring of learning enables teachers to ensure that all pupils receive the attention they need; for example, in a Class 7 lesson seen, the children's enthusiasm for learning about Roald Dahl's life was effectively channelled into a timed writing session which enabled the teacher to speak with individual pupils about their work. In a Class 1 lesson observed the teacher's meticulous planning ensured pupils' progress in developing their understanding of vowel sounds. The plans for this lesson demonstrated the teacher's thorough understanding of her pupils' learning and personal needs, indicated the strategies likely to be useful for supporting them and recorded their progress. Despite examples of excellent lesson planning in both the upper and lower schools, lesson planning is inconsistent in quality. Where it is too limited it results in time being wasted and occasionally to loss of concentration by individual pupils. Occasionally planning is insufficient to ensure that able pupils are challenged sufficiently. The school is aware of this and has implemented new lesson planning guidance. Overall, teachers demonstrate a consistent approach to classroom management and a very positive approach to encouraging pupils to act responsibly.

Pupils are articulate and effective communicators supported through regular opportunities for discussion and debate in lessons. Their oral confidence is further developed in extra-curricular activities such as a debating club. The quality of questioning by teachers is frequently a strength of lessons, challenging the most able and encouraging where pupils are less confident or have insecurities. Less successful lessons lack pace and pupils occasionally become disengaged. Whilst these lessons sometimes have positive features, opportunities for extending discussion are not always taken. Resources to support teaching and learning are adequate but not always used to the best effect and the school is aware of the need to consider how they can be further improved, and in particular how ICT can be further utilised in the classroom.

The school has a clear framework for assessment. Teachers frequently use information well about pupils' progress and attainment to plan their lessons to meet the needs of pupils with a range of learning needs, although records seen show a range of formats. In the lower school, pupils remain with their class teachers up to Class 8 and this ensures that the teacher has a good knowledge of the learning needs of the individual pupils in their class, and has frequent opportunities to speak to them about their work and progress. In the upper school, teachers regularly test pupils' knowledge and record their progress to ensure that weaknesses are identified and subsequently addressed according to the nature of the subject. Pupils confirm that they have good opportunities to speak with their teachers about their work and to receive support. Weekly meetings of teachers are used to discuss pupils' progress and to identify where support is needed. This reflects a key feature of the Steiner approach to assessment. Additional 'child study' meetings are used to study a child in depth. Such meetings focus on the whole development of the pupil including their physical, emotional, social, behavioural and intellectual features. The effectiveness of this approach is supported by training days.

Since the last inspection the school has established central records to support further monitoring and assessment of pupils' progress. A recommendation to this effect was made in the previous report. The centrally held records of pupils' progress are now regularly up-dated for both the lower school and the upper school. The form of these records has been designed to be relevant to those age ranges. Pupils' progress records in the lower school include examples of attainment, such as pieces of writing. In the upper school the data now allows progress in each subject to be analysed, including for example identifying where a pupil is falling below their expected rate of progress in a subject. Guidance on monitoring and assessment is provided but guidance on marking and feedback still has inconsistencies, for example in feedback to pupils about the quality of their work. Despite such inconsistency inspectors found excellent examples of marking and feedback in both the lower and upper schools.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

**PART 2 - The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent; the quality has been maintained since the last inspection and reflects the strong development of British values. Pupils actively learn about the importance of living in a society under democratically agreed laws, guaranteeing personal liberty. They learn this not just through their study of history, such as that of Greek democracy in the lower school or of the French Revolution in the sixth form, but through the life of the school itself. The ethos of the school ensures that the daily experience of all pupils is worthwhile and that the wishes and views of pupils are taken into account. Mutual respect and tolerance for others with different personalities, values and cultural backgrounds is at the heart of the school experience. These qualities are evident in pupils' attitudes and their daily conduct and relationships. Their understanding of diversity is deepened and extended through the school's curriculum, which begins with the early polytheist and monotheist religions and includes Buddhism and the Abrahamic faiths. Festivals of all the families' cultures, including Islam and Shinto, are celebrated and visits are made to mosques in Gloucester. The school has a valuable link with local imams. In the upper school comparative religion is formally studied, but some pupils say that they would welcome more opportunity to discuss the present day tensions between countries and communities of different faiths.

Pupils of all ages are confident and are strongly independent in their actions, beliefs and opinions. They combine strong self-esteem with awareness of the feelings of others. They respect the beliefs and opinions of others, as their own opinions and beliefs are consistently respected by their teachers. Through their writings and art pupils express an understanding of themselves and of others as well as of issues in the world around them. They are well behaved in class and around the school. They understand the differences between right and wrong and contribute to and respect the rules of conduct. They are bold and physically active. This is evident among younger boys and girls climbing permitted trees and building dens.

It is inherent to the school's Steiner Waldorf character that it functions as a community of pupils, staff and parents and that pupils of all ages acquire the habit of contributing to it fully. All share in the work of other classes in assemblies. School

fairs in the cycle of celebrations provide opportunities to raise funds for the school and for local and national charities, such as Action Aid. A concert in Tewksbury raised money for Children in Need. Pupils sing in local churches, including Gloucester Cathedral. The school performed three plays to which the local community was invited. Groups of pupils sing carols in local markets and care homes. Preparation for economic life, including matters of employment and the management of money, is built into the Steiner programme as pupils become older

Pupils show a strong and democratic sense of initiative and responsibility; for example, senior pupils organised, carved and donated a beautiful handrail for a staircase to the handwork workshop. As they move through the school, they learn about the history of the institutions of government from their origins in India, Mesopotamia and Egypt to present day Britain's constitutional monarchy. They have the opportunity to participate in the process of election, holding their own mock local elections and a mock referendum on Scottish independence. This enabled them to consider British values and what it means to be British. The school has responded positively to the latest requirements for pupils' personal development by writing an overall policy, underpinned by clear and appropriate procedures. Even though the school's practice already reflects the Steiner principle that the propagation of political or any other partisan view is unacceptable, they have made this explicit in their written procedures.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

**PART 3 - The welfare, health and safety of pupils**

The school's provision for welfare, health and safety is good. It has a clear, accessible and comprehensive policy for safeguarding pupils which includes child protection and makes appropriate reference to the latest government legislation and guidance. All staff are aware of the helpful information and clear guidance it contains, and have received appropriate training to fulfil their responsibility for safeguarding pupils. The designated safeguarding lead has received training at the appropriate level to lead the school's work in this area. He ensures that policies are reviewed and updated at least annually and that all staff, including new appointees, are appropriately trained and vigilant in safeguarding young people. Several other staff and the Chair of Trustees have also received enhanced training in safeguarding, so that the school's commitment to and awareness of safeguarding matters are high. The child protection file is detailed and well organised, but does not yet facilitate easy tracking of particular cases.

The school hosts a small number of pupils from other countries, principally Germany, who come for a term or longer to improve their English and gain experience of another culture. They stay with host families. The school is meticulous in ensuring the safety of these boarding pupils, checking accommodation and host families thoroughly, matching boarders' interests and checking, through the use of questionnaires, meetings and discussions, that the boarders are safe and happy. There is an excellent information pack to support boarders, parents and host families. The boarders report that they have made excellent gains both in terms of their English and their independence and personal development through the experience. The school community also benefits from their contribution to its cultural life.

Teachers foster very good relationships among their pupils, know them well and supervise them appropriately, so that the school is an inclusive community in which firm friendships are established. Prevention of bullying is taken seriously and all cases are handled effectively and with care so that children understand the harm it can do. The school's behaviour policy supports the anti-bullying strategy well. Sanctions for serious misdemeanours, although these are relatively rare, are appropriate and carefully recorded. Pupils say that they feel safe in school, report that bullying is not an issue and have confidence that any incidents would be handled effectively by staff. They know about e-safety and cyber-bullying through discussions in class. They do not use school computers before the age of twelve and at this age they are required to sign and abide by the school's policy for acceptable use of computers. The school operates a clear and sensible policy for the use of ICT and has appropriate filters and safeguards in place to ensure that the pupils do not access undesirable websites. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe while using the internet.

The school pays close attention to pupils' health and safety in school and when off-site. Comprehensive risk assessments are undertaken for the school buildings and grounds so that the pupils can enjoy using the facilities safely. There are good procedures to ensure that pupils are kept safe on school trips. Risks are assessed sensibly and good records are kept. Close attention is paid to fire safety. Equipment is tested regularly and a termly drill is held to ensure that there is a well-rehearsed evacuation procedure in the event of a fire. Staff training in first aid is up to date, including in paediatric first aid for Kindergarten staff. There are good facilities for treating injured pupils and appropriate records are kept of accidents. Pupils learn about the importance of good food and how to maintain their health and fitness. The school fulfils its duties under the Equality Act. Registers record attendance appropriately and absences are followed up, but as the registers for youngest children are held by Kindergarten staff, the school still does not have a central system for registering the attendance of all pupils, which was criticised in the last inspection. Attendance is around the national average. The admission register is kept appropriately and holds all the requisite details.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

#### **PART 4 - Suitability of the staff, supply staff and proprietors**

The school has a clear recruitment policy which follows the latest government legislation and guidance and is implemented consistently. The single central register of staff appointments is well maintained and held electronically. It contains a full record of the comprehensive checks that the school has carried out on all staff, trustees, volunteers and boarding host families in order to safeguard the pupils. The evidence to substantiate the school's rigorous checking and vetting procedures is held in confidential staff files which are correctly completed and maintained.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

## **PART 5 - Suitability of the premises and accommodation**

The school is located in large and pleasant grounds which afford excellent opportunities for sports and play. The school premises have been further developed since the last inspection and now include a large sports hall with good changing and showering facilities. The space in the former farmhouse, in which the administrative centre is located, together with its collection of converted outbuildings and newer additions, is well used to provide classrooms and specialist teaching accommodation. The school library is small, cramped and uninviting. Although book collections exist within subject departments, there is no communal reading and resource area. Medical facilities are appropriate and there are sufficient toilets for the sole use of pupils. The school accommodation is clean. Close inspection of the buildings has generated a programme of maintenance which has been carefully prioritised and informs the development plan. Attractive displays of pupils' work enhance the learning environment and celebrate their achievements. The school grounds are well laid out and make a major contribution to good outdoor learning and imaginative play. However, a potential health and safety hazard is presented by the earthworks at the back of the new sports hall which are not fully fenced off.

### ***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

*The school complies with all but one of the requirements.*

### ***What does the school need to do in order to comply with the regulations?***

*In order to comply with the Independent Schools' Standards Regulations 2003 in full, the school should:*

- fence off the area at the back of the sports hall where there are earthworks in progress (paragraph 23C).

## **PART 6 - The quality of information for parents**

The quality of information for parents, carers and the community is good. 'Wynstones Weekly', the school newsletter, is offered either as hard copy or as an email attachment. The Education Leader and Business Manager contribute short pieces to every edition, which parents appreciate. There are periodic reports from Trustees. Survey results are published here. Pupils enjoy seeing their work featured. This might include selections of poetry, short essays, reproductions of artworks and splendid photographs, such as those of Class 7 pressing apples to make mead and apple juice as part of their medieval Main Lesson. School plays are reviewed. Diary dates, and invitations to events are provided; for example, parents are invited to festivals and to attend termly parents' evenings.

The school website contains good information on the curriculum, school ethos, pastoral care and examination results, and a colourful prospectus provides informative details about the school. The child protection policy, anti-bullying policy and code of conduct, together with other policies, are readily accessible. A handbook for parents and pupils is provided which provides useful contact numbers and email addresses. It emphasises that the Education Leader is available for consultation and conversation, and that surgeries with teachers are available. Each pupil receives a suitably detailed yearly report, which outlines the curriculum journey undertaken and charts each pupil's progress. From Class 9, a report of Main Lessons is sent home each term and a full report of all subjects is sent home annually. Some parents say

that they would like more information on their child's progress. Email addresses for all staff are provided and staff generally respond when contacted. A few parents indicate that they have waited a long time for a response.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

## **PART 7 - The effectiveness of the school's complaints procedure**

The school's complaints policy meets requirements and is effective. There have been two formal complaints in the past year, and both were resolved at an early stage.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

## **SECTION C: ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT, AND MAINTENANCE OF THE ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL**

*This section is not a requirement of the Education Act 2002. The business organisation and management of the school were inspected by the Lay Inspector, who has written this section of the report.*

### **The quality of the organisation and management of the school**

This year, with the support of the College of Teachers, the Council of Trustees and members of the Association, the school has taken the step of appointing an Education Leader and a Business Manager. These new roles mark a significant departure from the way Wynstones functioned previously.

Major change takes time to achieve but greater leadership and accountability is already freeing teachers from organisational tasks, which made great demands on their time and energy. They are now able to devote themselves more fully to their teaching. The Education Leader, who has taught for many years in Steiner Schools, is the Chair of the College of Teachers. One of the aims for the school is to become proactive rather than reactive and the Education Leader is tasked with moving the education forward into the future. She attends most meetings and regularly liaises with the wider parent community. An action plan resulting from a questionnaire issued to parents in October is helping to shape decisions.

The Business Manager takes care of matters which are not directly concerned with education. His areas of responsibility include: the school site, school improvement, outreach, the school newsletter and website, fundraising, maintaining and updating school policies, job descriptions, recruitment and retention of pupils and the financing of professional development. He also attends all major meetings.

The upper and lower school have designated Chairs and there is a representative from Kindergarten. The College meets each week to study questions of pedagogy. The departmental Teachers' Meetings are the places where best practice is shared and where peer-orientated professional development occurs, together with in-depth child studies. The curriculum is discussed at Education meetings, which are held for all teachers. A two-year teacher appraisal process is in place.

There is an active Parents' Forum, which meets regularly and invites speakers to visit to speak on topics of interest. Volunteer class representatives help with communication and fund raising. The school works actively with the Steiner Waldorf Code of Practice and has managed to maintain its ethos, notwithstanding the radical change caused by the management restructuring process. A representative attends all Steiner Waldorf Fellowship meetings and reports back to the school.

The majority of pupils are very positive about their school, although some older pupils feel that they did not receive sufficient helpful advice about what they should do in terms of study and further opportunities. A smaller number wished for more resources, including computers, to be available. The vast majority of parents are very pleased with the school and appreciate its ethos and teaching. The school is gradually addressing specific areas of organisation and management, which need to be prioritised, such as communication with parents. Some parents objected to a change in school hours and others have concerns regarding fees. The school buildings and surroundings enhance the education and support a wide variety of activities. A new gym enables after-school clubs such as *Circus Skills* to function. Pupils like their school.

***Could the organisation and management of the school be improved?***

The Trustees might like to take into consideration the following suggestions as to where improvements could be made:

- pupils might appreciate more advice in terms of study and further opportunities, together with a review of their resources;
- a photograph of all school staff with names would help people to know who to look for, especially to identify subject teachers; and
- aspects of the website need to be updated more frequently.

## **PART D: EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE**

At the time of this inspection the school had received exemptions and disapplications by the Secretary of State from parts of the learning and development requirements of the EYFS. Additionally full exemption has been given from the assessment requirements at the end of the EYFS (the Early Years Foundation Stage) profile. These parts were excluded from this inspection.

### **The overall quality and standards of the early years' provision**

The overall quality and standards of the early years' provision are good, with several outstanding aspects. Leadership and management are effective in evaluating Kindergarten practice and promoting improvement. The children make good progress in their learning and development and are well prepared for the next stage of their education. The Kindergarten staff have rightly identified the need to plan to extend the learning of the older Kindergarten children who are of statutory school age and who have moved beyond the requirements of the EYFS. This differentiated planning is made for each session, but does not yet have a longer-term structured programme. The two Kindergarten classes meet the needs of the range of children who attend, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The younger children are very well integrated into the activities of the older ones. This includes sharing social play and developing their concentration and awareness of how to behave. The requirements for safeguarding and welfare are met.

### **How well the early years' provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend**

The focus of the educational programmes is mainly on the prime areas of learning – communication and language, physical development, and personal, social and emotional development. This provision is good. The specific areas of learning are less directly addressed, in particular those aspects from which exemptions and modifications have not been granted by the Secretary of State. Their appropriately high expectations are supported by good differentiated daily planning for the children who are of statutory school age but this does not currently form part of a longer-term planned programme. Staff are able to enthuse, engage and motivate the children. In addition, they work well with parents and carers to help the children to settle and to keep parents informed about their children's progress and achievement.

### **The contribution of the early years' provision to children's well-being**

The Kindertartens provide extremely effective care which enables the children to feel emotionally secure as well as ensuring that they are physically, emotionally and mentally healthy. The children form appropriate bonds and secure attachments with the staff. They are happy and enjoy their time in the Kindergarten. They explore their surroundings confidently and independently. In particular they play extremely well together, with the younger children benefiting from the examples of behaviour and cooperation shown by the older ones. Excellent practice is shown when staff allow the children to try several times to undertake challenging tasks, such as moving large items of play equipment and furniture, only intervening if absolutely necessary or if safety is at risk. The staff ensure that the children understand the importance of physical activity and the recently upgraded sand play areas are very used for digging, raking and other activities. The healthy snacks promote the children's awareness of healthy eating. They are able to manage their own hygiene and personal needs effectively. Transition into Class 1 is well managed.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years' provision**

The staff reflect appropriately on their practice: this has enabled them to identify the need for more differentiated planning for the older children whilst meeting the learning and development requirements of the EYFS. Such self-evaluation is outstanding and is used to set appropriately challenging targets for improvement. This is supported by good performance management and staff professional development. The setting receives funding for three and four year olds' places, and the staff have good regard for the British values of mutual respect and tolerance of different beliefs as well as supporting individual children's freedom within the context of a clear expectations of cooperation and good behaviour. The EYFS requirements for safeguarding and welfare are met at all times and are implemented consistently. The Kindergarten environment is welcoming, safe and stimulating. Partnerships with parents and external agencies are effective in enabling the children to receive additional support where appropriate.

### ***Does the school meet the statutory requirements?***

Yes.

**This report has been prepared by the School Inspection Service, which provides independent professional inspection of all schools accredited as members of the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship. Further copies of the report are available from the School Inspection Service website: [www.schoolinspectionservice.co.uk](http://www.schoolinspectionservice.co.uk)**