

# BLUE MOUNTAINS STEINER SCHOOL

*Inspiring a love of learning*



“Our highest endeavour must be to develop free human beings, who are able out of their own initiative to impart purpose and direction to their lives.”

Rudolf Steiner

[www.bluemountainssteiner.nsw.edu.au](http://www.bluemountainssteiner.nsw.edu.au)

# BLUE MOUNTAINS STEINER SCHOOL PROSPECTUS



## OVERVIEW OF STEINER EDUCATION





# Blue Mountains Steiner School

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## ENROLMENT INFORMATION 2009

### SCHOOL TERMS

- Term 1 Wednesday, 28 January to Wednesday, 8 April  
(Kindergarten Thursday 29 Jan. Sessional to start the following week)
- Term 2 Wednesday, 29 April to Wednesday, 8 July
- Term 3 Wednesday, 29 July – Wednesday, 30 September
- Term 4 Wednesday, 21 October – Wednesday, 9 December

**OFFICE HOURS:** 8.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m.

### SCHOOL HOURS:

- 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday to Thursday
- 9 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. Friday (Kindergarten and Class 1)
- 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Friday (Classes 2, 3, 4, 5, 6)

Kindergarten children are to be picked up from the Kindergarten playground, children from the other classes can be picked up from their classrooms or the circular driveway at the top of the school. The internal road from Kindergarten to the circular driveway is one-way.

### SCHOOL FEES

#### **Kindergarten to Class 6**

	<u>Per annum</u>	<u>Per Term</u>
1 <sup>st</sup> child	\$ 5,540	\$ 1,385
2 <sup>nd</sup> child	\$ 4,156	\$ 1,039

3<sup>rd</sup> and subsequent children are free when enrolled in the same calendar year.

These fees include some local excursions, most books and materials. Specific items like recorders and compasses may be charged separately. The same applies to class camps. Fees are set at a rate that meet the cost of running the school.

#### **Sessional Kindergarten**

\$40 per session (day)

The discounts for more than one child do not apply to sessional students.

## **Enrolment Fees**

A \$55 non-refundable, non-deductible Application Fee per child is required to secure an enrolment interview. To request an interview complete the enclosed Enrolment Application Form together with payment of \$55 fee.

A \$400 non-refundable, non-deductible Enrolment Fee per family (for children concurrently enrolled) is payable to secure a place at the school **when a place is offered to the child** (after being interviewed). If a place is offered you will be sent a Letter of Offer. If you would like to accept the offer, return a reply with payment of \$400 Enrolment Fee. (Sessional enrolment fee is \$200 with a further \$200 to be paid where the child enrolls in Kindergarten.)

These fees are used to provide income for capital works at the school.

## **FEE POLICY OVERVIEW**

Fees per term are payable **in advance** from the first week of term and must be paid within 21 days unless a prior arrangements in writing have been made with the Financial Manager.

Fees for a new student starting at the school after the term has commenced will be charged only for the term weeks s/he attends.

Full fees for a term are payable even when a child is absent from school during that term.

Four weeks' notice **during term in writing** is required for a student's withdrawal from the school. Failure to give the required notice will attract a week's fees for each week of notice not given. These fees are in addition to the term's fees. The term's fees are to be payed in full even if a student does not remain at the school for the entire term. Upon departure from the school all outstanding fees will be referred to a Debt Collection Agent.

**The school reserves the right to not allow a child back to school in one term if the child's account is in arrears from the previous term.**

**Fee Relief** is available to families who have been enrolled in the school for more than one year and all previous fees have been paid up to date. Fee relief is designed for families who experience **unexpected** financial hardship. Applications for fee relief are to be made in advance and not after a term's fees have gone unpaid. Applications for fee relief are to be lodged in May and November. Forms are available in the office. A small amount is set-aside in the budget for fee relief. Fee relief is graded on a sliding scale and is **short term only**. The fee committee will assess each application on its merits. Not all applications will be successful. Fee relief is granted for two terms at a time. Where fee relief is granted, failure to pay all outstanding monies by the end of term may result in the fee relief for that term being revoked.

## CLOTHING

The school has no set uniform however the Parent Association sells brightly coloured T-shirts with the school emblem on them. Alternately **appropriate clothing should be plain, simple and colourful. Inappropriate clothing would include black garments and clothing showing slogans, advertising or commercial images.** NO Spiderman, BOB the Builder, Barbie etc. (the same applies for school bags and lunch boxes). NO singlets straps or  $\frac{3}{4}$  tops and NO thongs to be worn to school. Garments should fit well for aesthetic, warmth and safety reasons and should be made of natural fibres where possible. Jewellery such as ear-rings etc are not allowed for safety reasons.

All students must wear a hat at all times during outside play. The Parent Association also sell hand-dyed school hats.

Inside shoes - Students wear plain simple, soft inside shoes in the classroom. These shoes are much like slippers.

## FOOD

Students eat their meals inside their classrooms with their teacher before play time.

### Recommended Food:

**Morning tea:** Fruit, cheese, vegetable sticks or similar healthy snacks – **no packaged food** eg chips

**Lunch:** Wholesome sandwiches, rolls, salads, fruit or other similar healthy food.

**Lollies and peanut products are not permitted at school.** Our school is a peanut free environment.

Traditionally children bring a healthy birthday cake to school for sharing with their class on their Birthday.

**Class Fundraising:** Often class groups will take turns to sell and serve meals to raise money for class camps. Food needed for these stalls will be determined by the class teacher.

## SCHOOL SUPPLIES

All materials used by the students (crayons, pencils, crayon bags, pencil cases, recorder bags, paints, craft materials), are supplied by the school or made by the children themselves. Where specialty items are required each class teacher will arrange a group purchase to ensure materials are of the same quality. Should materials not be cared for, not looked after, lost or damaged, the Family may be asked to replace these goods.

## **TOYS**

Toys from home are discouraged. This helps the children to identify with the differing relationships to home life and school life.

## **TELEVISION, VIDEO AND COMPUTER GAMES**

Teachers cannot emphasise strongly enough that television, video and computer games are damaging to children (especially young children) and inhibit the healthy development of concentration, imagination and general work habits. **Television before school should be especially avoided if not discouraged altogether.**

## **RECOMMENDED READING**

Strangers in Our Homes: TV and Our Children's Minds  
Susan R. Johnson, M.D., 1999. Internet

"un-TV" guide: How and why to discover the joys of family life without television.  
P.J.Long and Gerette Buglion. Internet

Behind the Screen: The effects of "screen time" on the growing child  
Mariane Judd. Orana magazine 2001

Is television violence emulated?  
David Dinkins. Internet

Learning to log off:  
Deborah Cameron. 4/5/01 The Sydney Morning Herald 2001, INSIGHT; Quarterly on CD-ROM

Children's Television Viewing And Obesity And Aggression.  
Norman Swan interviewing Dr Tom Robinson  
The Health Report. Radio National 4/6/01. Internet  
Reff: Robinson et al. Effects of Reducing Children's Television and Video Game Use on Aggressive Behaviour.  
Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine 2001; 155:17-23

Television: The Cyclops that eats Books  
Orthodox America  
Larry Woiwode. "Freedom, Responsibility, and the American Literary Tradition": The Truth About TV  
Reprinted lecture. Imprimus, Hillsdale College (Monthly Journal) February 1992

Look what they've done to my brain! How info overload is changing our minds.  
The runaway brain. Wendy Tuohy. Sunday Life. January 20, 2002

50 or so Reasons Not to Let Your Child Indulge in T.V. Watching  
Chris Tyrer. copies available from the school office

Endangered Minds.  
Jane M. Healy. Touchstone Books. New York, New York.  
ISBN 0-671-67349-1

**GENERAL :** Queries can be brought to the Educational Coordinator for clarification.

Parent/Teacher meetings are held at least twice a year for each class. At these meetings class curriculum matters are discussed and parents participate in the artistic activities that the children are involved in. Individual interviews are arranged during Term 2 or 3, Teachers are open to make home visits where desired. Reports are provided for primary students at the end of Term 2 and 4.

Family and friends are welcome to attend school festivals. We ask that no filming and or photography is used (except where prior permission is granted where deemed appropriate). Ceremonies are an experience for the children they are not a performance.

Parents/Carers wishing to show visitors around the school are welcome to do so, please contact the Office for a suitable time.

Visitors to the school are required to sign “in and out” at the office.

Parents/Carers – extended family and friends are welcome to take part in “Open Main Lesson” (Classroom observation) please contact the office to make a booking.

Parents/Carers are invited to join one of the many and varied Parent Committee’s; this is a wonderful opportunity to meet other parents and nurture the school community.

Parents/Carers are often involved in various classroom assistance activities; offering support to the class and Teacher. This is a wonderful opportunity to share in a child’s learning experience. The class Teacher will identify support areas and work in conjunction with the Class Representative to coordinate a Help Roster for those who enjoying assisting.

Parents/Carers who have a child enrolled in the school are eligible to become members of The Blue Mountains Steiner School Limited. Membership is required to vote at the Annual General Meeting held in Term One each year. To stand for election to Council (the Board of Directors) it is recommended that parents be a member of the school community for at least 3 years.

All staff working with children at our school must agree to have a “Working with Children Police Check” prior to employment. All volunteers must sign a “Prohibited Employment Declaration” by law.

**Copies of the following policies can be obtained from the office.**

Assessment Strategies	Grievance Procedure for Students
Accident Policy	Clothing Policy
Administration of Prescribed Medicines Policy	Confidentiality Policy
Anti-Racism Policy	Enrolment Policy and Procedure
Behaviour Management Policy	OH & S Policy
Child Protection Policy	Fire Drill Procedures
Child Attendance Policy	Gifted and Talented Policy
Food Policy	Sun Protection Policy
Grievance Procedure for Parents	Violent or Aggressive Behaviour Policy

# Overview of Steiner Education



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Steiner Schools in Australia: [www.steiner-australia.org](http://www.steiner-australia.org)

Last updated 26 November 2004

## Philosophy

Steiner schools have a unique and distinctive approach to educating children, aiming to enable each stage of growth to be fully and vividly enjoyed and experienced. They provide a balanced approach to the modern school curriculum. The academic, artistic and social aspects, or '*head, heart & hands*', are treated as complementary facets of a single program of learning, allowing each to throw light on the others.

This is implemented by using art as a practice, and language to develop the feelings, by nourishing the children with the rich heritage of wise folk tales, histories, fairy stories, poems, music and games that are part of our world civilisation. This creates the cultural atmosphere in which the children are taught reading, writing, arithmetic, nature study, geography, science, languages, music and other subjects.

Steiner designed a curriculum that is responsive to the developmental phases of childhood and the nurturing of the child's imagination in a school environment. Steiner thought that schools should cater to the needs of the child rather than the demands of the government or economic forces, so he developed schools that encourage creativity and freethinking. His teaching seeks to recognise the individuality of the child and through a balanced education, allows them to go into the world with confidence.

*"The need for imagination, a sense of truth and a feeling of responsibility - these are the three forces which are the very nerve of education."*

*Rudolf Steiner*

The unique quality of human beings is our capacity for conscious thought. Steiner schooling strives to support the development of well rounded human beings who are able to feel deeply and broadly, to think penetratingly and clearly, and then to act rightly out of conscious and free choice.

The best overall statement on what is unique about Steiner education is to be found in the stated goals of the schooling:

*"Our highest endeavour must be to develop individuals who are able out of their own initiative to impart purpose and direction to their lives".*

*Rudolf Steiner*

## The Steiner Educator

Steiner defined 'three golden rules' for teachers:

*"to receive the child in gratitude from the world they come from;  
to educate the child with love;  
and to lead the child into the true freedom which belongs to man."*

The reverence and respect felt by Steiner teachers for the special qualities of each stage of childhood shapes the school environment, the way children are spoken to, the materials used, the activities undertaken and the approach to learning at each developmental stage.

Teachers are dedicated to creating a genuine love of learning within each child. By freely using art, craft, music and language in conjunction with the teaching of academics, learning becomes a living, creative process. The academic subjects are enriched and enlivened in a way that meets the developmental stages of the children, offering both sensory and intellectual nourishment.

Steiner educators believe that children should not be rushed into adult consciousness but allowed to savour their childhood. To assist the young people to learn to know and love the world in childhood, to begin to develop good judgement in adolescence, to freely take responsibility for life's journey in adulthood; these are our tasks as teachers and parents.

Close co-operation of the teachers as a group is an important aspect of the provision of care to individual children. When a teacher encounters a difficulty with a particular student, this will be brought to the attention of colleagues at a staff meeting, and through the pooling of experience and insights, a solution can more quickly be found.

The class teacher takes responsibility for the major part of the class work, including the *main lesson*. Class teachers will have both their usual State Teaching Certification, as well as specialised training from a recognised Steiner teacher training college.

## Kindergarten

During the first seven years children are physically forming and live very much in their imagination. This great capacity to enter into imaginative pictures and stories is a good place to begin the process of learning. Free, creative play is considered the best preparation for self-realising adult life.

The teacher endeavors to create an environment that gives children time to play and encourages them to exercise their imagination and learn to conjure up ideas from within themselves. Simple homely tasks and artistic activities to both do and see are balanced with story telling, singing games and generous play times. A rich supply of natural materials provides scope for imagination in play, which refined toys often deny.

Activities offered for the four to six year olds are based on the house and garden. These include sweeping, gardening, cooking, building cubbies, looking after animals, singing, listening to stories, helping to prepare the meal table, cutting fruit, painting, and drawing. Children learn to enjoy building, using the natural materials in the room to make their own constructions and patterns. Practical experience helps the child develop confidence and capabilities.

Steiner education seeks to nurture the senses through watercolour painting and singing and beeswax. The teacher works consistently to provide rhythm and structure to the day, week, year and whole curriculum, to harmonise with the child's natural rhythms.

At this age, children are discovering how to relate socially with a peer group and take part in fundamental life tasks. Through meeting and playing creatively together, children learn vital interpersonal skills. The teacher plays an important role in enabling relationships between children to strengthen through play.

Young children develop primarily in their doing, learning through imitation and physical activity. The role of the teacher is to provide a model for the children and a secure space in which to discover the world. They are not yet ready for more formal classes. Thus, the teacher reserves the formal teaching of numbers and letters for the child's next developmental stage, signalled physically by the change of teeth, at about the age of seven.

## Teaching Methods Class 1 - 6

One of the special features of Steiner education is that, when the new Class 1 is formed, the teacher commits him or herself to the care of those children for 6 years. The benefits of this commitment become obvious as the relationship between the teacher, the children and their families grows. The teacher and the children set out on the educational journey together, and the teacher is as involved in the creative learning process as are the children.

A central part of this teacher's task is to intimately understand the needs of each child, and to nurture the development of a real spirit of sharing and community within the class. In a loving, structured environment, with the encouragement of their classmates and teachers, the children develop and appreciate their strengths and work at their difficulties. The social and moral learning that takes place in childhood is as important as the academic.

In the younger grades, all subjects are introduced through artistic mediums. This promotes abilities such as creative and flexible thinking, imagining ideas and problems from different perspectives and layering one thought upon another as part of a process of problem solving. Children can attain greater levels of achievement in all subjects through this method, than from dry lecturing and rote learning.

Mastery of oral communication is integral to all learning. Hearing, re-telling, acting and illustrating stories enriches the child's imaginative life and grasp of language. The ability to generate ideas, communicate them and bring them to fruition is essential to future success in adult life.

Writing and reading are taught from class 1. The child first learns to write using the shape of the letters to suggest meaning, ie. M for mountain, V for valley, W for waves. In addition, they may walk the shape on the floor in the classroom and draw pictures that include the shape. This allows a deeper connection with, and an understanding of the letters, rather than just memorising the abstract shapes. The children write words and read their own writing before working with printed literature.

An understanding of numbers is built on the basis of concrete, real-life tasks - such as dividing a cake to share, estimating, measuring and through counting aloud, chanting of tables, musical rhythms and skipping games. These learning experiences are real and meaningful.

We aim throughout the classes to share the finest literature with the students, which is appropriate to their age. The stories told by the teacher change as the child develops, correlating the era of human history with the developmental stages of the child. For 6-7 year olds the teacher may draw mainly on folk and fairy tales, moving on at age 8 to fables and legends, to Old Testament stories at age 8-9. Norse stories and sagas are presented at age 10, Greek myths and legends at age 11 and the Roman period at age 12.

### The Main Lesson

The Main Lesson is one of the basic elements of the Steiner curriculum. It involves the thorough working of the main subjects (such as geography, science, history, mathematics or literature), taught in main lesson blocks of about two hours per day, over 3-4 weeks. It is always conducted in the morning, when the children are fresh and is followed by a change of activity.

The topics are approached through a variety of means, including stories, painting, recitation, a physical group project or a game, until the children have made some connection to it with every part of themselves. It is then set aside to 'digest' and a further topic is taken up. This pattern is natural to children, as anyone who has observed the success of 'crazes' in a playground will know. The result is a thorough and satisfying assimilation of knowledge, thus maintaining the child's enthusiasm for learning.

There are no textbooks as such in the primary school years. All children have 'main lesson books', which are their workbooks that they create during the year. They essentially produce their own 'textbooks', which record their experiences and what they've learned.

### Music

Music is a very important form of expression and brings balance to the day. Exercises for training the musical ear are practised, providing a solid base for subsequent musical accomplishment. Singing and choral work are developed throughout the school years. Children learn the recorder from class 1 through to class 6. Individual tuition of a stringed instrument and music notation is taught from class 3, and by class 4 children participate in orchestral work.



## Art & Craft

Art and craft are an integral part of the curriculum and are used as a way of engaging the children in the current topic from every angle. This complements and enhances the intellectual aspects of the class work. Learning through the arts promotes multiple skills and abilities and nurtures the development of cognitive, social and personal competencies. For example, in a class 4 history main-lesson the children may learn Nordic dancing, construct a Nordic ship and paint a Nordic shield.

Art includes recitation and drama, wet-on-wet painting, form drawing, beeswax and clay modeling, and handcrafts such as sewing, knitting, weaving, woodwork and carving.

The primary school child experiences life as a world of pictures and feelings. This promotes a rich inner structure enabling the later development of conceptual thinking. The practice of art educates the feelings and calls for skill, form and style.

Handwork is an important bridge in developing a connection between the child's inner world and the outer world. Handwork stimulates their inventive powers and the ability to have creative ideas when facing the unknown. The child must develop judgement and a sense of form and space. Learning of this kind can have a real balancing effect on the child's whole being. It awakens feelings in the child who is one-sidedly intellectual, stimulates activity in the weak-willed child, and awakens the thinking in the dreamy child.

Children who learn to make practical things in an artistic way, for the benefit of others as well as themselves, will be able to form their lives and their relationships in a social and artistic way when they are older, thereby enriching their lives. The training through art in school is not for the purpose of producing artists but in order to educate young people for the art of living, based on disciplined exercise. The *type of exercise* and the *time* it is introduced are the important factors.

*"Joy and happiness in living, love for all existence, a power and energy for work, such are among the lifelong results of a right cultivation of the feeling for beauty and art".*

Rudolf Steiner

## Religion & Festivals

Classes in religious doctrine are not part of the curriculum. The Steiner curriculum is non-denominational and respects the individual beliefs of families. Students of any ethnic or religious background are welcomed.

Steiner schools do have a spiritual orientation based on a generally Christian perspective. Spiritual guidance is aimed at awakening the child's natural reverence for the wonder and beauty of life.

Festivals originated in ancient cultures yet have been adapted over time. Seasonal festivals serve to connect humanity with the rhythms of nature and the cosmos. We celebrate the major Christian festivals of Christmas and Easter, the summer and winter solstices, as well as other festivals relevant to the locality. This provides an opportunity for participation of the whole school community. There is joy in the preparation, the anticipation and the celebration itself. The activities, songs and rhymes used in class also relate to the seasons.

## Languages

One or more foreign languages are introduced to the children mostly through singing, rhymes and games. Teaching continues in an oral format for the first few years, with emphasis on songs, recitations and practical situations. For example, preparing a French recipe in a cookery session conducted in French.

In classes 5 and 6, classical languages such as Greek and Latin may be introduced.

## Eurythmy

Eurythmy is a dance-like art form, which involves the expression of sound through movement: specific movements correspond to particular notes or sounds. It enhances coordination, strengthens the ability to listen and reinforces social connections.

Eurythmy is introduced in kindergarten and continues throughout school.

Eurythmy teachers have at least four years of specialised training.

## Computers & Technology

Computer skills of all types are becoming more necessary in today's world. However, we do not believe it is appropriate or relevant for children to become involved with them from a young age. Electronic media is not used in the classroom.

In Steiner schools computers are not generally introduced until secondary school. However, it may be appropriate to introduce them toward the end of the primary years if many children will be entering mainstream secondary school.

## An Overview of Main Lesson Curriculum

### Class 1 & 2

Form drawing, Introduction of Numbers & Letters, Writing & Reading  
Arithmetic: The four Processes, Mental Maths, Number Patterns  
Fairy Tales, Nature stories, Celtic Legends, Animal Fables, Lives of the Saints,  
Home surroundings

### Class 3 & 4

Geography of Home, School & Surroundings  
Bible Stories from the Old Testament  
Arithmetic: Measurement, Fractions, Long Multiplication & Division  
English: Parts of speech, Sentence Building, Punctuation, Story-Writing, Letter  
-Writing, Tenses  
Reading  
Farming, Clothing & Shelter, House Building  
Peoples Work in the World  
Nordic Mythology  
Australian Aboriginal Stories  
Comparative Zoology (man and his relationship to animals)

### Class 5 & 6

Stories, history and maps of India, Persia, Babylon, Egypt, Greece & Rome  
Science: Botany, Astronomy, Acoustics, Mineralogy, Heat, Electricity &  
Magnetism  
Geometric Drawing  
Greek Myths  
Geology: landforms and associated rock types

Mathematics: Fractions & Decimals, Percentages & Interest, Exchange & Discount, Formulae, Beginnings of Algebra

English: Literature, Poetry, Active & Passive Verb Forms, Direct Quotation, Conditional Sentences, Business Letters, Style

### Behaviour Management

The Steiner educator sees the child as consisting of body, soul and spirit. The belief of an indwelling soul in a child evokes within adults a reverence and sensitivity for that child's being. The child deserves respect and dignity. It is the responsibility of the parents and teachers to guide the child during the early years of life.

Behaviour management includes the reflection on the part of the teacher on how he/she manages the children. Could we have handled a situation more effectively? What positive strengths can we build on? Have we really thought through the kind of things we want to draw out of the child or allow to unfold in the child to help him/her overcome the difficulty?

The following three principles form the basis from which discipline procedures are determined:

Respect for all human beings (including oneself and others).

Respect for all living creatures and plants.

Respect for school and personal property.

In both the classroom and the playground we wish to foster respect for other human beings in an atmosphere of peaceful co-operation.

Procedures employed by the teacher to promote a harmonious atmosphere beneficial to growth and learning are as follows:

Creation of rhythm in the day.

Being worthy of imitation.

Re-direction of children to another activity, ie. Working alongside an adult.

Separating by removing children from a potentially dangerous situation.

Support both aggressor and victim by giving a few minutes 'time out'. This is for the children to recover and regain their grounding. Verse or song may be used to lighten and heal the situation.

Parents will be told of any difficulties at the end of class.

Time will be made for longer discussions with parents if required

## Frequently Asked Questions

How do children fare when transferring from a Steiner class to a mainstream class?

Generally, transitions are not difficult. The most common transition is from primary to secondary school, and usually takes place without significant difficulties. This education releases capacities, keeps the mind and imagination fresh, and awakens life interests. These qualities the children take with them and mark them out as good students.

Transitions in the lower grades, particularly between the first and third grades, can potentially be more of a problem because of the differences in the timing and approach to the curriculum. These issues can be discussed with the class teacher on an individual basis.

***What if there are difficulties between the class teacher and the student?***

This is a very common concern among parents when they first hear about the 'Class Teacher' method. However, in practice, the situation seems to arise very rarely, especially so when the teacher has been able to establish a relationship with the class right from the first grade. Incompatibility with a child is infrequent, as understanding the child's needs and temperament is central to the teacher's role and training. When problems of this sort do occur, the faculty as a whole works with the teacher and the family to determine and undertake whatever corrective action would be in the best interests of the child and of the class.

***How does the Steiner approach challenge the children who enter first grade already knowing how to read? What will such children learn, wont they be bored? How can we encourage a balanced development?***

In working toward balanced development, it is necessary to consider more than intellectual achievements. What is the child like emotionally? Are they happy being a child? Do they relate well with other children, or almost exclusively with adults? Are they comfortable in their body and well coordinated?

The approach to writing and reading involves the child's mind, body and feelings, which provides a meaningful connection with the work that maintains the interest, involvement and delight of even the most intellectual of children.

Imaginative play and the arts can have a healing influence on the child's life forces. Images from fairytales are deeply nurturing to the unconscious elements of the young child.

Early intellectual awakening can result in a weakening of the child's vital forces, manifesting in frequent colds or other illnesses. The dreamy state of childhood is an essential element in the healthy formation of the physical body during the first seven years. Because the job of the intellect is to analyze and exercise critical judgement, very bright children may have difficulty relating emotionally with other children, a problem which can intensify as the child becomes older.

If parents want a child's power of imagination to be nourished and cultivated, if they have faith that not learning to read as quickly as a neighbour or relative expects is fine, the child will retain the openness necessary to enjoy and benefit from the Steiner approach.

**How does a play-oriented approach to the early years of schooling prepare children for the high-tech world in which we live? What about computer literacy? I want my child to have a competitive edge, not be behind the times.**

There is no demonstrated advantage for a child starting to use computers at the age of five over a child who begins at age twelve or fourteen. Computers, as word processors and vehicles for logical thinking through programming, are suited to the realm of the adolescent, not the preschool age child! Computers as toys are inappropriate, because they present a two-dimensional abstraction of the world to the young child, who should be moving and playing and acquiring a broad base of experiences of the physical world and the world of imaginative play. The visual image on the computer screen is especially hard on the developing eyes of the young child.

Most of the educational programs for young children try to teach concepts at too young an age. The child needs to be addressed through movement and imitation. The fantasy and play of the young child transform into the artistic imagination of the primary school child, the questioning of the teenager and the rational thinking of the young adult. We should have confidence that fantasy and imagination, which are natural to the young child, form a better foundation for later creative thinking than early learning. Creative thinking is more needed in our highly technological world than five-year-olds who can push buttons on a computer.



## Rudolf Steiner & Education

Rudolf Steiner (1864-1925) was an Austrian philosopher, scientist and humanitarian who has profoundly influenced Western culture. He worked with scientists, artists, doctors, ministers of religion, teachers and industrialists to help transform our civilisation. His work is best known through Steiner Education, BioDynamics, Anthroposophical Medicine and Architecture. His scientific investigations of the spiritual world led to the development of Anthroposophy, The Wisdom of Man.

His background in history and civilisations coupled with his observation in life gave the world the gift of Waldorf Education. It is a deeply insightful application of learning based on the Study of Humanity that helps develop consciousness of self and the surrounding world. Steiner's perception that although external conditions in our time are changing as never before, the essential nature of humanity remains; in particular, the stages of human development through childhood follow a natural pattern unaffected by short term social change.

The task of educators remains to prepare children for an unpredictable future by nurturing healthy development 'from the inside', to provide the right nourishment at each stage of physical, emotional and spiritual growth. This kind of education had its origin in the first school established by Rudolf Steiner for the children of workers at the Waldorf cigarette factory in Stuttgart in 1919. He developed a flexible curriculum that has evolved with time and has been adapted to local conditions in the various countries where Steiner schools are found.

Steiner schools now form the largest and fastest growing group of independent private schools worldwide. There is an international group of over 800 schools and 1200 kindergartens in many countries including Australia, Britain, Sweden, Austria, Norway, Germany, Switzerland, Holland, U.S.A. and Canada.

There are currently over 50 schools and Kindergartens throughout Australia, with 4 operating within the State system in Victoria.

Although Steiner education has already stood the test of time, many believe it will show its full promise in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The significance of its rapid growth around the world indicates that it may well be an education coming into its own because it fosters a thinking appropriate for our age.

## Recommended Reading

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Querido, René: *Creativity in Education: The Waldorf Approach*. Dakin, San Francisco, 1982.

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# The **RESULTS** of **WALDORF EDUCATION**

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What, really, are the *results* of Waldorf (Rudolf Steiner) education? One may feel that the brochures make Waldorf look excellent, and that the goal of “Education Towards Freedom” is very sound. One may be impressed by the enthusiasm and commitment of teachers in a Steiner school, and admire both the academic and artistic work of the students. But it is good to hear from people *outside* the Waldorf movement, who have worked together with – or in some other way have had experience of – Waldorf graduates and who have an objective professional basis for judging whether this form of education really accomplishes its goals.

The following three short articles, coming from California, New York and Europe respectively, offer just this kind of professional and objective evaluation.

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### **The Waldorf Grade School**

James Shipman  
History Department, Marin Academy  
San Rafael, California

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(Explanatory Note: The Marin Waldorf School ends at Eighth Grade. A number of its graduates have gone onto the Marin Academy – not a Waldorf school – for their secondary education).

What I like about the Waldorf School is, quite simply, its graduates. As a high school teacher at Marin Academy, I have seen a number of the students who come from your programme, and I can say that in all cases they have been remarkable, bright, energetic and involved.

One of my duties is to teach World Civilisations to incoming 9<sup>th</sup> graders, so I tend to be one of the first people who encounter a Waldorf graduate. My course is not like the standard History of Western Civilisation course, but rather requires the student to investigate the deeper aspects of the world’s cultures. For example, we are not so much interested in the chronology of Chinese emperors and the dynasties to which they belonged; instead we want to explore and understand the principles of Taoism and Confucianism and how these underlying philosophies helped to shape the Chinese culture. We aren’t so much interested in memorizing names and dates as we are in understanding what motivates people, and why they make the choices they do.

I find the Marin Waldorf graduates to be entirely willing to undertake this sort of investigation. They are eager to learn. They do not complain when I assign, for example, a passage from the *Bhagavad Gita* and then ask them what they think. Indeed, that is what I find most remarkable about Waldorf kids: they have been taught

taught to think; thinking is an “okay” activity for them to engage in. I think they intrinsically understand the difference between thinking about an issue and merely memorizing “the right answer” for the test.

Waldorf students are not simply bookworms, however. In fact one could find Waldorf kids completely involved in the theatre, the arts, music and sports here at Marin Academy. What I see here is an integration of the faculties – mental, emotional, physical and spiritual – which, when coupled with the overtones of personality, unite to form unique individuals. Marin Waldorf students to me are interesting people. They can converse intelligently on almost any issue, because they have been taught to examine. They can be enormously sympathetic to almost anyone’s plight because they have been taught to tolerate. They can gracefully

dance or score a goal because they have been taught to move. They can circulate among the various groups on campus and engage in a variety of activities because they have been taught to harmonise.

We used to use the word “holistic” or “whole person” to describe the kind of person I have outlined above. Whatever the term used, it is apparent to me that the Marin Waldorf School consciously turns out calm, centred and confident students. For my part, I deeply appreciate the school’s efforts, because based on their work, I get to enjoy those students who come to Marin Academy. It is with humility that I note that Waldorf students allow me and my colleagues to influence them.

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**The Waldorf Graduate:  
A Personal Reflection**  
Dr W. Warren B. Eickelberg  
Professor of Biology  
Director, Premedical Curriculum  
Adelphi University, Garden City, New York

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(Explanatory Note: Most, though perhaps not all of the students referred to here as “Waldorf graduates” had their high school years in a Steiner school.)

The 1986-7 academic year will mark my thirty-fourth year of teaching at Adelphi University. When I began, no biologist knew what a gene was and now we manufacture them. When I entered teaching, there were but a dozen antibiotics, and now they number in the thousands. Thirty-four years ago, many of the biological subdisciplines did not even exist and much of what we taught then would now be incorrect. The minds of men and women have opened for us new vistas to view; then hands of men and women have given us new technology, but the souls of men and women remain the same, always searching for the answers as to who we are, why we are here, and what our destiny is.

As there have been changes in academic content and technology, so the typical undergraduate student has changed. I lived with and experienced the job-orientated World War II veteran. I remember well the recall to active duty of many for the “peace action” in Korea. I sat through the “teach-ins” and the campus strikes of the Vietnam era. I lived through the revealing anatomy of the miniskirt, the drabness of the dark blue

jean phase, the demands by the students to develop their own curricula, the reorientation of learning by professors and administrators, the establishment of obviously immoral sex mores, the decline in admissions standards, and the unique and possibly devastating effect that the medium of television has had on young people. Without any doubt, my past three decades have been marked by change, change, and ever more change.

Throughout this dynamism of activity where values were under attack and standards of behaviour were challenged, from time to time there would be a unique stabilizing influence in my classes: a Waldorf School graduate. And they were different from the others. Without exception they were, at the same time, caring people, creative students, individuals of identifiable values, and students who, when they spoke, made a difference.

Let me share with the reader some of these features so that you too might see the difference. Almost without exception, every Waldorf School graduate showed concern for the embalmed animals we use for dissection in Comparative Anatomy. I was always asked if the animal dies painlessly, and they further questioned as to how. The Waldorf School graduates of the fifties, and of today, still show a unique reverence for life, and they regard an experimental animal, whether dead or alive, in a special way...not just another reagent or piece of equipment to use in a laboratory exercise. Whereas most students are surprised to see the giant liver of a shark, it is always the Waldorf School graduate who sees this massive organ filled with oils as the result of a unique plan to give an animal buoyancy.

When describing geologic time, I have often told the true story of a man whose calculator could record the number  $9.9 \times 10^{99}$ . He discovered that even the estimated number of atoms in the universe or the volume of our known universe in cubic millimeters could not begin to approach this order of magnitude. It was a Waldorf student who found an article suggesting that the chances of two human beings, other than identical twins, being genetically alike would approach one out of  $1 \times 10^{6,270}$ , and thus concluded that indeed each person is a unique and specially created individual.

We know the atoms in every cell of every living being are found in the stars and the intergalactic gases and that we all make up a Community of Matter. As we in science view the universe from its creation to its predicted end, man may seem, astronomically speaking, rather insignificant, but any Waldorf School graduate will remind each of us that Man is still the only astronomer.

Once, when I was discussing the decreasing gene frequencies of Blood type B from Siberia through western Europe, it was a Waldorf student who related this fact to the invasions by Genghis Khan and Tamerlane. It has been said that historians see civilization as a stream through history, and the stream is often filled with blood, loud shouts, killing, and discoveries. Somehow it is the Waldorf School graduate who sees the stream, but also focuses on the banks where there are people who love, raise children, build homes, write poetry, worship, and carve statues.

Waldorf School graduates see behind the facts that often must be repeated or explained on examination. They are keenly interested in the macrocosm of the universe and microcosm of the cell's ultrastructure, but they know that Chemistry, Biology and Physics can't tell them much about the nature of love. They see, in embryology, a fetus developing a compound called prostaglandin enhancing the mother's response to oxytocin so that labour can begin, and they see this as a reflection of a guided universe. I feel certain that all Waldorf School graduates believe in the orderliness of our universe, and they believe the human mind can discern this order and appreciate its beauty.

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**Research On Waldorf  
School Graduates**  
Exerpts from an Article in  
*Der Spiegel*, December 14, 1981  
(Translation by Renate Field)

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(Explanatory Note: “Der Spiegel” is a German weekly newsmagazine, somewhat analogous to our “Time” or “Newsweek”.)

Waldorf Schools, generally reputed to produce “beautiful souls” weakened for the tasks of real life, actually do quite the opposite, say results of a study which could even correct the evaluation of *Gesamtschulen* (twelve-year schools which include both those students preparing for college and others as well).

During the current school year, 32,000 students are being educated outside the state school system in 72 Free Waldorf Schools – according to the pedagogical concepts of the anthroposophist Rudolf Steiner. They attend a school which, according to the aims of their founder, aspires to transmit not only knowledge and ability but also content helpful for life and a perspective on life’s purposes. Their school day does not follow the 45 minute beat of strict timetables, but runs according to the rhythm of “blocks” and during the first eight years, with strong artistic emphasis. Their career is not accompanied, year after year, by reports, marks and promotions, but is free of selection and pressures of grading – a tempting perspective surely, but for many parents hardly a realistic one or an adequate preparation for the battle of life. This view is now being shaken by a scientific study of “The Educational Background of Former Waldorf Students” – the first empirical research of the Waldorf movement.

Three independent scientist, paid by the Bonn Department of Education, interviewed 1,460 former Waldorf students born in the years of 1946 and 1947 and came to a prevailing positive result in favour of the Waldorf Schools. Their students have achieved, so the examiners have discovered, “an educational plateau well above average.”

The results appear to be formulated conservatively. For it is just this achievement of the Waldorf schools that holds surprises for the educational policy-makers. Twenty-two percent of the students polled passed the *Abitur* at their own Waldorf school – even back in the years 1966 and 1967, almost three times more than in the state schools. Moreover, 40 percent of those polled, who had “never attended any other school than a Waldorf School” from grade 1 through 13, passed the *Abitur*.

These statistics appear even more significant when the conditions under which the exams are taken are considered – for instance the fact that “the *Abitur* does not lie within the interest of Rudolf Steiner’s pedagogy” as stated by Stefan Leber, Board member of the Association of Waldorf Schools.

Practically speaking, this means that the students are taught according to Waldorf guidelines during their 12 years at school and are not specially prepared for the diploma examination. Only in the voluntary 13<sup>th</sup> year is the curriculum oriented toward the requirements of the state schools and the *Abitur*. On top of this, the exam itself was “an altogether unfamiliar *Abitur* given under strictest conditions: all tests came from outside the school; the exam was monitored by a state team of examiners.” Proponents of the conventional school system much be irritated by such results



because after all the Waldorf School is a *Gesamtschule* (see definition in the first paragraph) of the purest type. Nevertheless it is now proven, says Bernhard Vier, who headed the research team, that “among the students who were taught for 12 years on a non-selective basis, an even higher percentage are able to pass the *Abitur*”. All this, says the educator, “the academicians have never wanted to believe possible.”

The Waldorf students showed a preference for occupations in the educational and social fields (20 percent), in the medical (12 percent), and in the artistic/linguistic field (12 percent); legal and technical professions were “underrepresented”. The graduates obviously took their incentives for professional choice from the Waldorf values. Success, prestige, recognition and career potential, and income played at best a subordinate role. As “personally especially important” in making their decision, the graduates named above all their own inclinations and abilities, independence and interest; then followed social and altruistic aspects.



## **THE POWER OF IMAGINATION**

Report on research with Steiner-educated adolescents  
By Jennifer Gidley, Educare News February 1998 \*

Many young people in Australia today are experiencing crises (increases in youth employment, homelessness, chronic truancy, drug abuse and suicide) which may impact on how they think about the future. In this context it is not surprising that recent studies with youth point to the emergence of feelings of deepening negativity, lack of hope, meaning and a sense of disempowerment in relation to the future. The self-perpetuating possibility that negative views of the future might in turn lead to a further weakening of young people's ability to cope in their present lives is suggested by some researchers. Though these studies and subsequent claims relate to the Australian situation, similar findings are evident throughout the western world.

By contrast, one of the planned outcomes of the educational approach that Rudolf Steiner introduced in Germany in 1922 [sic] was the quality of confidence. This confidence Steiner speaks of is in sharp contrast to the lack of self-esteem associated with much of the youth futures research. I recently undertook some research in Australian Steiner Schools as part of a research Master of Arts in Education at Southern Cross University. My research found that the imaginative, artistic, holistic approach of Steiner education empowered a group of young people to envision positive futures which they felt confident and proactive towards creating.

This article presents some of the findings of my research in more detail. The participants in the research were 128 senior secondary students who had been substantially educated within the Rudolf Steiner schooling system in Sydney (Glenaeon Rudolf Steiner School), Melbourne (the Melbourne Rudolf Steiner School, and Adelaide (Mt Barker). Steiner education is an innovative, alternative educational approach that has developed over the past 75 years into the largest, non-denominational, independent schooling system in the world. There are currently about 40 Steiner Schools in Australia.

It [Steiner Waldorf education] provides an integrated, holistic balance of intellectual /cognitive,

artistic/imaginative and practical/life skills education grounded in a comprehensive theory of human development. This integrated conceptual approach to the child as a whole person is supported by such unlikely partners as contemporary art education theory and development in the cognitive sciences springing primarily from Gestalt psychology.

The active cultivation of the imagination so central to Steiner education is considered by futures researchers, such as Rick Slaughter, Frank Hutchinson and Elise Boulding, to be a factor in helping people to envision prospective futures which are different from the past and present. The foremost tool for the cultivation of the imagination in Steiner schools is the use of the story as a pre-eminent medium of teaching. The rediscovery by some contemporary educators and futurists of the importance of story-telling and myth-making also suggests they are keys to educational 'meaning' and the creation of positive futures.

The creative arts are also a pervasive media in Steiner schools giving meaning to every subject and promoting intrinsic motivation and positive self-esteem. Rudolf Steiner linked the artistic education of the child with the development of initiative: 'If, through an artistic approach which appeals to the whole human being, we gradually unfold in our teaching what has become purely intellectual in the world, our pupils will grow into complete and integrated personalities capable of developing real initiative'.

### ***Future Paradox***

An interesting paradox emerged from the findings of my research, in that the Steiner students were just as inclined as other students and young people to have grave concerns in terms of their expectations about the future of the environment, social justice and conflict/violence. This suggests that they have taken in much of the negative imagery presented in the media about disturbing global trends in these areas. Yet in spite of this, they were able to produce comprehensive positive visions of their

preferred futures. While this in itself is not so unusual, what is exceptional compared with findings from mainstream youth is that many of them seemed undaunted in their own will to do something to actually create their 'preferred futures'. In spite of the students' rather grim expectations with regard to the future prospects of an increase in wars around the world, they are committed to the view that it is vital to learn at school about peaceful ways of resolving conflicts both locally and globally. Further, they consider that there is value in peaceful imaging of a 21<sup>st</sup> century world without weapons and wars. Along similar lines, the students have strong views about the value of learning at school about possible ways of lessening the problems of hunger, homelessness and unemployment. They are also convinced that it is helpful to create positive future images of a world without such problems. When it comes to considering proactive solutions to the environmental problems that loom so large in the minds of the students, the greatest proportion of students (98 per cent) believe that it is important to learn at school about possible ways of lessening problems such as the 'greenhouse effect'. A very high proportion of students (64 per cent) also consider that it is helpful to create positive images of a future world where polluted air, water and land have become things of the past.

### ***Reinventing Values***

When asked what, if any, personal contribution they could make to solving local problems, 70 per cent of the Steiner students felt they could contribute in some way. Interestingly, 36 per cent of students saw their own personal development as a factor here, indicating a sense of personal responsibility for the problems, linking it with personal empowerment. In giving their ideas about how human beings need to change in order to create a better world for the future, the students identified 'personal and community empowerment', 'activism' and 'consciousness development (or spirituality)' as important qualities to be fostered. In their ideal future visions they also identified a quality that could be called 'future care'. Some of these qualities are explored below in some detail.

***Personal Empowerment*** is a factor here which indicates the students' awareness of the value of the contribution of each individual human being. It is well exemplified by 'Sarah', a fully Steiner-educated year 12 student, who seem completely undaunted by the immensity of the global problems that have

been identified by the students elsewhere: 'I can do everything in my own power to resolve my own conflicts peacefully and constructively and hopefully it will spread further. I can do good, be generous, do volunteer work for community health/charities and conscientiously make an effort to reduce my own and my family's pollution and waste. I'd like to also go to a third world nation and do all I can there.' On the other hand, a number of students also suggest the idea that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, so the individual empowerment is tempered with community empowerment issues rather than individual egotism or power-seeking.

The need for a community effort is highlighted by 'James', who attended a religious primary school and Steiner secondary and is currently in year 10. 'If everyone decided to do something about it then we could, but at the moment most people think it won't affect them. I think there are enough resources in the world to make everyone happy.' The quality the students identified as **consciousness development** represents their recognition that there is an ethical or spiritual aspect that underpins their actions. The mention of the need for an increase in 'awareness' was a frequent response by students in terms of what needs to change in order to create a better world. That this is a central or driving factor as a basis for education and action, is suggested by 'David', a fully Steiner-educated year 11 student: 'I think it is very important to become aware and sufficiently educated in these topics. From there one can choose to tackle more active action'.

A critical view of the responses above might consider it naïve to think that the world's problems can be tackled by more awareness or consciousness, or even individual and group actions in the face of the immensity of some of the issues involved. And how, anyway, might this additional awareness and consciousness that drives the action be developed in humans today? It seems that some students have given thought to these issues as well. 'Kalia' is a year 11 student with an Australian father and Maori mother who has been Steiner educated since the end of primary school and considers that 'knowledge is a key link to awakening people to issues'. Is it merely coincidence that the Steiner educated students who took part in this study are not disempowered by the images our society conveys through the media of a fearful or

nonexistent future for the planet, even though the too have imbibed these negative images?

If the only images that young people are receiving about the future are negative, fearful ones, then it is not surprising that they are feeling disempowered. It is argued here that the active cultivation and positive nourishment of the imagination as an integral part of teaching methodology (as is practiced in Steiner schools) could have a long-term strengthening effect. Given that all young people are constantly exposed to fragmented, violent negative imagery, the present findings support the idea that a strongly cultivated artistic imagination may buffer and counteract the negative.

The findings of this research suggest that an educational style which contextualizes information into a meaningful form through stories, and other integrated modules, contributes to the meaning making capacities of the students, in turn empowering them. It might be argued that socio-economic factors may also be an influence, since Steiner Schools are fee-paying private schools. However, it has been shown in other Australian research that negativity and disempowerment towards the future is strongly evident in mainstream youth regardless of socio-economic factors.

In summary, in spite of the obvious power of the tacit negative imagery of our society's hidden

curriculum, the balance provided by an active, consciously cultivated positive imagination in a young person can transcend the negative and even violent imagery. This can motivate their will to action, empowering them to create their positive imagined futures.

### ***Implications***

There has been much concern in recent years about the extent to which young people generally seem to be disempowered by their negative views of the future. Yet this study demonstrates that disempowerment by their negative consequence of fears and concerns about disturbing global trends. It has been shown here that educational input can potentially facilitate a positive, confident outlook, thereby empowering students for their future lives. It is vital that the current emphasis on 'head knowledge' in mainstream education be balanced in the future by:

- cultivation of the imagination through story telling and the arts'
- a reinvention of human values to include activism, spirituality and future care.

If we wish to empower young people to create their preferred futures, schools of the future would need to be more holistic, artistic, imaginative and proactive.

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(\*Reproduced by Blue Mountains Steiner School with kind permission of *Educare*)

## ***Rudolf Steiner Education Keeping Childhood Alive***

***"An education which fails to feed the deeper-living forces of childhood represents not only the absence of a good but becomes a source of ill. It underlines rather than builds up hope and promise for a better future. Cleverly conceived programmes we have in plenty. The intentions are good, but the generations do not grow stronger and the world situation does not improve"***

These words were written in 1982 by Francis Edmunds, a life-long Steiner educator in Britain. Throughout his life he remained engaged with the questioning surrounding the values of education and its relationship to the social future, the very same questions which convinced Austrian philosopher, Dr. Rudolf Steiner to formulate his educational philosophy and open the first Steiner school in Germany in 1919.

Steiner education has long been recognised by bodies such as UNESCO as having a strong social and humanitarian base. As it has spread around the world over the past 80 years – it has proved itself again and again to be able to adapt to the local culture and traditions whilst holding true to its educational approach. Today there are more than 1200 schools across all continents - even one recent one in mainland China! There are more than 40 schools in Australia.

Healthy societies are made up of healthy optimistic individuals. To that end, In Steiner schools, we have a clear idea of our task. The Steiner approach is essentially aimed at supporting the healthy balanced development of each individual child. The outcome of this process is to equip the individual to participate in and contribute to a healthier society.

More and more professionals –working with children in many capacities – have become concerned recently about the erosion of the deeper-living forces of childhood that Edmunds referred to.

In 2006, an extraordinarily powerful full-page letter appeared in the London Daily Telegraph, signed by 110 leading academics, educators, child and adolescent psychologists and psychiatrists, doctors, authors, past and present Children's Laureates and many others. In it they expressed their deep concern about the escalating incidence of childhood depression and the fact that children's development is being drastically affected by the world they live in.

***"In a fast-moving, hyper-competitive culture, today's children are expected to cope with an ever earlier start to formal schoolwork and an overly academic test-driven primary curriculum. They are pushed by market forces to act and***

*dress as mini-adults and exposed via the electronic media to material which would have been considered unsuitable for them even in the very recent past.....we must make a public statement: a child's physical and psychological growth cannot be accelerated. It changes in biological time, not at electrical speed. Childhood is not a race." (London Daily Telegraph, Sept 13, 2006).*

So, in a nutshell, what will you find in a Steiner school?

Firstly you will find beautiful, colourful and harmonious physical environments, nourishing the children's senses and feelings -it was once said that the three elements that have the greatest impact on successful learning experiences are the teaching, the curriculum and the environment.

Secondly you will find teachers who strive to meet the individuality of each child and work to support the strengthening of that individuality. The richer the force of the hidden individuality of each child is able to become, the more abounding in quality is the life that ensues.

Furthermore, you will find a curriculum and methodology which arises out of a clear picture of human faculties and matches the time and stage at which they develop. In this way, learning becomes a natural, rather than a rushed process, reduces stress, and provides for a range of learning experiences and styles - practical, artistic and academic. An ongoing love of learning and a well-rounded intelligence are outcomes of this approach.

Finally Steiner education stands proudly behind its emphasis on the importance of the arts and creativity in education. To quote Professor Ken Robinson, Professor Emeritus, University of Warwick, UK from a talk he gave recently in Australia:

"Our education systems don't need change; they need a revolution to allow creativity to thrive. Creativity is as important to education as literacy and numeracy"

For more information, please contact Executive Officer, Rudolf Steiner Schools of Australia, PO Box 111, Robertson 2577.