



SCHOOL INSPECTION SERVICE

INSPECTION REPORT FOR RINGWOOD WALDORF SCHOOL

DfE No: 835/6022

The key inspection judgements for this school are:

The quality of education	good	2
Pupils' personal development	good	2
Safeguarding pupils' welfare health and safety	good	2
Leadership, management and governance	requires improvement	3
Effectiveness of the Early Years' provision	good	2

Compliance with the Independent School Standards:

The school does not meet the regulatory requirements of schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Compliance with the Equality Act 2010:

The school meets the requirements of the Equality Act.

Compliance with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage:

The school meets the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Date of inspection: 24-26 November 2015

SECTION A: SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

The quality of education provided by Ringwood Waldorf School is good. The curriculum is good, especially in its breadth and continuity. Teaching is also good, although it varies between classes and subjects. Assessment is particularly good where it is led by the SEND support team. Assessment in classes is good although in some classes and subjects it relies on verbal feedback rather than written comments on pupils' final drafts of work. Pupils' achievement is good overall. In a significant minority of lessons, inappropriate behaviour disrupts lessons and constrains pupils' progress. Personal development is good. The school ensures that the promotion of partisan political views is precluded and that a balanced presentation of opposing views is provided to pupils. The arrangements for pupils' welfare, health and safety are good although there are no written guidelines on e-safety for pupils, parents and staff. Leadership, management and governance require improvement. Following handover of ownership to the Ringwood Waldorf School trust, management issues have not been fully resolved and oversight of leadership and management is not clear in the school's practices. Governance is under review, although this is seen as an updating rather a reforming process.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT:

To meet the independent school standards, the proprietor must:

- ensure that those with leadership and management responsibilities at the school demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role and fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently (paragraphs 34 (1)(a) and (b)).

Whilst not required by the regulations, the proprietor should:

- improve the quality of teaching in science and mathematics particularly in the Upper School to ensure that pupils make better progress in these subjects;
- promote consistently good behaviour with a focus on learning in all classes, overseen by school leaders and managers;
- ensure that training in safe recruitment is undertaken by at least one person involved in future staff recruitment;
- produce guidelines on e-safety for pupils, parents and staff; and
- ensure that the records of complaints address the full requirements of the school complaints policy and not just the EYFS requirements, and include full details of the complaint.

SECTION B: INFORMATION

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION:

This inspection was carried out by the School Inspection Service (SIS) in accordance with Section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. It follows the inspection framework agreed by SIS and the Department for Education (DfE).

In reaching their judgements, the inspectors observed lessons throughout the school in a range of subjects. They examined samples of the work of pupils across the Lower and Upper Schools. They observed daily life in the school including at break and lunchtimes. They examined the school's documentation, records and website. They held discussions with staff and with individual trustees. They took account of the responses of parents and pupils to the pre-inspection questionnaires, and whilst in school held discussions with groups of pupils representing classes in both the Lower and Upper Schools.

The inspectors were:

Reporting Inspector:	Dr Martin Bradley
Team inspectors:	Dr Christine Jones Mr Tony Hubbard
Lay inspector:	Mr Ewout van Manen

This table lists the names of classes used by the school and their National Curriculum equivalent:

Steiner class names	National Curriculum	
Kindergarten	Nursery, Year R, Year 1	Kindergarten
Class 1	Year 2	Lower School
Class 2	Year 3	Ditto
Class 3	Year 4	Ditto
Class 4	Year 5	Ditto
Class 5	Year 6	Ditto
Class 6	Year 7	Ditto
Class 7	Year 8	Ditto
Class 8	Year 9	Ditto
Class 9	Year 10	Upper School
Class 10	Year 11	Ditto
Class 11	Year 12	Ditto
Class 12	Year 13	Ditto
Class 13	Year 14	Ditto

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Ringwood Waldorf School opened in 1974 on its current site in a wooded area just outside Ringwood in Hampshire. Its purpose-built accommodation has been gradually developed to meet the needs of its pupils as the age range increased to three to nineteen years and the pupil numbers to the current 213. This is slightly down from the previous inspection when there were 264 pupils. The school has identified 33 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupil has a formal statement of SEND or an education and care plan.

The school has specialist accommodation for music, eurythmy, science, woodwork, handwork, art and information technology. Its aim is to provide a Steiner Waldorf education, promoting the fundamental principle of protecting the right to childhood and creative abilities for life. The curriculum is firmly based on the rhythms of the day, week and year. The early years' provision has received exemptions from aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage and from completing the Early Years Profile. Instead the Steiner profile is used. In common with other Steiner Waldorf schools the school has no headteacher and management primarily rests with the Trustees and the College of Teachers, supported by a school administrator.

Formerly part of the Sheiling Trust, the school was given its independence in the summer of 2015, with trustees for the Ringwood Waldorf School being appointed by the Sheiling Trust. The school uses Sturts farm as a learning resource.

SECTION C: THE INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

1. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good. It meets all the regulatory requirements and its own aims. The curriculum follows the Steiner principles of intellectual, physical and spiritual development faithfully, especially through the main lessons, which combine a variety of subjects and activities. The school has a suitable brief written policy on the curriculum, supported by detailed plans, which follow the detailed published Steiner Waldorf Curriculum, although they have not updated it to accommodate the most recent edition. Teaching is supported by suitable schemes of work and detailed lesson plans. These vary in detail and coverage, but provide at least adequately for content, differentiation and for review of individual lessons. Most plans show a highly reflective approach, catering for pupils' individual needs and talents, and taking account of issues raised in lessons. The school has correctly identified that more needs to be done to promote critical thinking across the school as much of the work below the Upper School is narrative and descriptive in character to develop creative thinking and observation skills as a precursor to critical thinking.

Planning and teaching support fundamental British values. The Steiner curriculum is clearly British in spirit as well as more widely European. The curriculum is extremely broad and balanced, particularly in the arts and practical

and aesthetic areas where all pupils have an exceptionally wide range of experiences, including working with textiles, wood and metal forging. Art and music are very strong with all pupils learning a musical instrument, and many reaching a high standard. All the required areas of learning are included throughout pupils' time at the school, giving great continuity. Computing is not introduced until Class 9 in accordance with the school's understanding of Steiner's ideas about child development. It has recognised that the use of information technology below Class 9 should be reviewed. The formal curriculum is not extended by extra-curricular activities, but this is more than compensated for by the breadth and range of the curriculum for all pupils, which enables them to leave as well rounded and well educated young people, well prepared for their future education and lives. The curriculum is well supported by a wide variety of educational trips and visits. Pupils value these highly. As at the last inspection, literacy and numeracy are well covered. Students are articulate, read and write very well and are competent in their use of number. As a result of the early emphasis on art, the quality of illustration, map making and scientific diagramming is high.

Good provision is made for pupils below compulsory school age, in line with the mandatory requirements of the EYFS. Provision for pupils over compulsory school age is also good. Even though pupils are not entered for public examinations, other than optional entry for GCSE English and mathematics, pupils are readily accepted onto A Level courses in local Further Education colleges and schools. The school has worked very effectively to establish links with a range of universities with arrangements for direct entry.

The quality of teaching and assessment

The quality of teaching is good. In the best lessons it offers appropriate challenges to the pupils who respond well. Varied activities sustain pupils' interest and ensure that they contribute well the lesson. Elsewhere the pace of lessons varies and pupils can lose interest when the tasks are less demanding or varied. In some classes in the Upper School the teachers demonstrate limited familiarity with the theme of the lesson. This is particularly evident in science and mathematics where the lessons lack sufficient challenge to engage the pupils properly and to extend their learning. In a minority of lessons, there was inappropriate behaviour from a small number of pupils which adversely affected learning and progress for all pupils in the class. The last inspection noted one such instance, and more were noted during the present inspection. These issues remain of concern. Whilst they occur in only a small number of lessons, the school has not addressed them sufficiently directly.

The teachers know the capabilities of their pupils very well. This enables them to provide work which supports pupils' learning and development effectively. In a Class 6 eurythmy lesson, concentration was well maintained and the pupils' showed good rhythmic awareness. Their concentration was assisted by the Class teacher's presence and by the good pace of teaching by the eurythmist, well supported by the pianist.

Reading, writing and numeracy skills are promoted well and speaking and listening skills are outstanding from the youngest classes. Numeracy is good

although the quality of teaching of mathematics varies especially in the Upper School. Main lessons provide particularly good opportunities to explore a theme or subject in depth over a period of several weeks. During the inspection a Class 4 main lesson on the theme of Man and Animals included individual project work, stories, art, discussions and a variety of activities which clearly stimulated the pupils' interest and imagination very effectively.

Pupils' work is assessed at several stages, especially where it goes through a series of drafts. This often means that the final version may not have any written comments. Also verbal feedback is a frequent feature throughout many lessons. Diagnostic marking, identifying achievement and areas for improvement, is evident in a number of subjects, but as noted at the last inspection, this is not consistent across all subjects.

Pupils' learning and achievement

The quality of learning is good. It varies according to the effectiveness of the teaching and in the Upper School is occasionally adversely affected by teachers' limited familiarity with the theme being taught. Pupils make good progress overall. In the younger classes in the Lower School, the challenge provided by the work varies and pupils occasionally lose interest as the pace of lessons slows.

Provision for pupils with SEND is particularly good. A range of needs is identified and monitored effectively using appropriate tests. A recent change in funding has meant that the provision has been reviewed to provide more one to one support as well as short sessions during main lessons. This is effective provision. The school continues to test all pupils in Classes 4, 6 and 8 with Class 10 being added this year. The arrangements for this have also been changed with teachers being trained and monitored by specialist staff who then mark the test materials, reviewing these with Class teachers. This thoughtfully planned approach has enabled continued identification of individual needs and support to be offered to pupils. There is good, albeit reduced, SEND support from outside specialists.

The school had sought to develop its work with the international Steiner School Certificate. After trialling the scheme, the College of Teachers decided to cease to use it and instead offer pupils GCSE English and mathematics from the beginning of the present academic year. Some parents expressed concern at the change, feeling that it had not been fully explained to them. No other public examinations are followed. The school makes considerable efforts to seek non-standard entry to further education. For the first time the school has a Class 12 and it has made significant efforts to seek non-standard entry to universities, receiving positive feedback from several.

2. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

The quality of pupils' personal development is good overall and has outstanding elements. It meets all the standards regulations. The curriculum includes an extensive programme of personal, social health and economics education (PSHEE), most of which is successfully embedded in the wider curriculum. The school acknowledges that it has not formally audited whether all elements are covered effectively.

Spiritual development is a prominent and highly effective part of pupils' education. It is evident in the quiet participation in the verses at the beginning of sessions. Pupils show sensitivity to their own feelings and those of others. This is strikingly evident in the art work in the lower and middle schools. Older pupils showed great maturity in their discussion with inspectors. Pupils interviewed are confident and have good self-esteem.

Pupils' moral development is also at the heart of the educational programmes and in most respects pupils respond well. They understand the rules of conduct, which reflect boundaries founded on a humane grasp of mutual consideration. They understand how the rule of law develops from their studies of early Mesopotamia, through Roman law to the rule of law in the modern world. Behaviour around the school and in a majority of lessons is good, and pupils arrive promptly and ready to work. In a significant minority of lessons low level disruption by a few pupils reduced the effectiveness of teaching.

Pupils' social development is good. The school is a lively and friendly community. Pupils respond very well to the opportunities to exercise responsibility in a variety of ways. In all classes pupils are assigned to the distribution and tidying away of classroom materials. The School Council has elected members from Class 6 upwards, who well understand their duty to consult their classmates, deliberate and report back. Pupils take a keen interest in raising money for charity, for example for the Goederich school in Sierra Leone. They enjoy providing carol concerts in the town, the local church and an old people's home. As a result of their travels to a wide variety of countries, meeting children and adults, they develop wide horizons and learn to value their own country and respect the customs and values of other nations and communities. This was especially evident in pupils in the Upper School. These had reacted to the recent news of the Paris bombings with great intelligence, suggesting that people must make sure that this does not divide different British communities.

Cultural understanding is very well developed. The aesthetic and practical subjects are highly valued and many pupils go on to pursue education and employment in this sector. The core curriculum takes all pupils systematically through the histories and cultures of the major world civilisations and religions in unusual depth, allowing them to see the importance of the Arab civilization and its contributions to the arts, science and the economy, as well as its interactions with Christianity. Pupils are clear about the importance of mutual tolerance and are given a solid grounding from an early stage all the major world faiths and cultures.

Good provision is made for careers guidance, including visiting guidance officers and related lessons in PHSEE. Earlier, economic education is well included in the work of the school. All pupils in Year 10 have a period of work experience. This provision is valued by the pupils.

The school's ethos and aims would not permit the promotion of politically partisan ideas, and there is no trace of partisan bias in the work and life of the school. Pupils say that teachers always encourage debate.

3. SAFEGUARDING PUPILS' WELFARE, HEALTH AND SAFETY

Provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good. Recent changes and a closer focus on procedures ensure that pupils feel safe. Current policies and procedures for safeguarding meet the relevant standards. The training programmes now in place are effective in making sure that staff are able to identify when a pupil may be at risk of neglect, abuse or exploitation and know how to report concerns should this be necessary. Documentation and record-keeping are up to date and follow the most recent government guidance. Safeguarding practice and strategies are supported by good links with local safeguarding bodies such as the Dorset safeguarding team.

The member of staff designated as the safeguarding lead works hard to maintain and complete the records of child protection concerns as they arise, following these up promptly. She ensures that the local authority is kept up-to-date with cases which require attention.

The school has suitable anti-bullying and behaviour policies which are implemented appropriately. Parents agree that they consider their children to be safe at school. Pupils are confident that they feel safe in the school. Most know who they should turn to in school if they have worries or concerns although some younger pupils were unsure about this. They are certain that bullying is a rare event in the school and is dealt with effectively. They understand the need for safe use of the internet and social media although the school has limited formal policies and statements in this area to support the pupils and their parents in keeping safe on line.

The school places a strong emphasis on ensuring pupils know how to keep themselves healthy. Food provided in school is well chosen and healthy with a strong emphasis on organic produce. Pupils are encouraged to keep fit through considerable participation in outdoor activities although the small size of the school and play areas is felt by some older pupils to limit their engagement in team activities. Support for emotional and mental well-being is thoroughly embedded in curriculum activities and the staff know their pupils very well and understand their needs. This raises pupils' awareness of negative influences including the dangers of abuse, sexual exploitation, radicalisation and extremism. Staff understand what needs to be done if concerns are raised about pupils who are vulnerable to these issues.

The school's arrangements for staff vetting meet the standards, and the relevant records and files, including the Single Central Register, are in good order. There is an appropriate policy for risk assessment, including external school activities, that is well maintained and implemented as necessary. Fire precautions are well organised with regular drills and checks on equipment. First aid arrangements are effective with staff appropriately trained and supported by suitable accommodation. The school has a clear policy on behaviour and any serious incidents are carefully dealt with and recorded. Attendance and admissions registers are well maintained.

While the overall quality of the premises and accommodation is good, some of the rooms, such as the laboratory, are small for the growing numbers of pupils especially older ones. The school continues to make good use of the combined hall/gymnasium and adjoining rooms. There are plans to add more accommodation, including showers and a new science laboratory. Present laboratory facilities are poorly organised. The preparation room is messy with some inappropriate storage of chemicals, an issue that has been addressed temporarily. The science teacher is in need of some urgent support to sort out the science resources before the situation becomes dangerous.

Other specialist accommodation is in better order, especially for the subject teaching in the upper school. Accommodation for the kindergarten is good with ample space that is well used and appropriate to the needs of the very small children. Pupils also use the local environment very well as a learning resource and visits to the Sturts farm are much appreciated.

4. LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

Leadership, management and governance require improvement. This is because two of the standards for leadership and management are not met. The senior managers, at both the College and Trustee levels have appropriate knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses, although there is not always a shared view of the procedures for addressing issues. At times the dialogue both between the management groups and with the parents is limited. This constrains the school's capacity to improve and limits the way in which those with responsibilities in the school can be held to account for their work. Leaders and managers do not have good enough systems for ensuring that the independent school standards are consistently met. This includes monitoring the quality of teaching to raise all teaching to the levels of the best, and addressing issues of some pupils' poor behaviour.

The change of ownership from the Sheiling Trust to the Ringwood Waldorf School in May 2015 has served to highlight issues of responsibility, management and organisation. Five new trustees were appointed to the school by the Sheiling Trust and it is hoped to recruit more. The College of Teachers is supported by the bursar and the administrator, although the latter had resigned before the inspection and was off sick. In his absence there is no person trained in safe recruitment practices. Some school procedures are not clearly documented or are not understood fully by staff. Documentation is not always easily available. Policies require an overview to ensure that they are all kept up to date. Similarly records are not always maintained in easily accessible formats to inform management decisions. Staff continuing professional training and development details, for example, are held in individual staff files, but there is no central record available to identify overall school needs and priorities. Records of complaints do not always include full details and the school uses a form intended for the EYFS, not for issues affecting older classes. Some parents criticised the manner in which the decision to cease to pursue the Steiner Schools Certificate was made. Such matters have affected the ethos of the school as it seeks to work in a collegiate way whilst the pedagogical vision and educational direction identified

by the College of Teachers are not clearly and consistently supported by other groups.

The standards regarding premises and accommodation are met, as are those for the information provided to parents. The complaints policy, revised shortly after the inspection began, meets the requirements, however the complaints practices do not distinguish sufficiently between parental complaints which come under the policy and staff complaints about other staff and pupil complaints which should be dealt with separately and differently.

Governance

The trustees have an adequate knowledge of the requirements of the independent school standards, and the delegation of ensuring compliance with these has been effective. The school is quite well resourced and has recently obtained planning permission for additional buildings and some internal work which includes the provision of shower facilities for pupils.

At the time of the inspection, the trustees were considering ways in which they could provide effective challenge and support for the school. No trustees attended the inspection feedback. A draft Development Plan identifies goals for aspects of the school's work and life. Although in its present form it does not set timelines for all goals or identify who would be responsible for them, it is intended to do so. The Development Plan seeks to review the mandate for the management of the school and to update documents on this. It does not seek to review governance and management structures or the relationship between the trustees, the College of Teachers and the school community.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS' PROVISION

Overall effectiveness: the quality and standards of the early years; provision.

The overall effectiveness of the provision is good. Children make good progress from their starting points and are generally ready for the next stage of their education. The care and learning that the kindergartens provide meet the needs of the range of children who attend. Staff know the children well and are able to work effectively to meet their individual needs. As a consequence the children are happy and feel safe. Their personal and social development is good. The requirements for safeguarding and welfare are fully met. The collegiate leadership of the kindergarten is effective. It successfully evaluates its practices and seeks to promote improvement to benefit the children's life chances.

The effectiveness of leadership and management.

The kindergarten staff have good expectations of what the children can achieve. For the older ones who are of statutory school age, these expectations are often implicit rather than being separately planned, although the staff are clear about what they provide as additionally challenging activities. The shared, collegiate approach in the kindergartens ensures that systems for supervision, management

and professional development are fully in place. The curriculum is broad and varied and meets those statutory requirements from which the kindergartens have not received exemptions or modifications. The children are provided with a good start and the Class 1 checklist ensures that the expectations of that class are incorporated into the children's kindergarten work. Equality and diversity are supported appropriately and behaviour is good. British values are actively promoted and the arrangements meet all statutory and other government requirements. Safeguarding arrangements are carefully planned and are effective.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

The staff know the children very well and have high expectations of all of them. They have a good understanding of the kindergarten age group. Assessment information on individual children is detailed and thorough. There are good links with parents who are engaged effectively in their children's learning. In turn, the assessment information is used to plan appropriate teaching and learning strategies, including the provision of extra support where needed. This enables the children to make good progress in their learning and development. Equal opportunities and the recognition of diversity are well promoted, and the children learn how to acquire the skills and capacity to develop effectively.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare.

The children's sense of achievement and commitment to learning through a very positive culture is evident in all three kindergartens. They become confident and self-aware. Through a good range of activities, supported by the rhythm of the day, the week and the year, they enjoy their learning and develop independence. They are well prepared socially and emotionally as they become the older members of the class and this provides them with good skills for their move into the Lower School. Prompt and regular attendance is encouraged, and there are high expectations of behaviour as they are encouraged to manage their own feelings and have respect for others. They develop an appropriate sense of how to keep safe from risks and how to keep healthy through the daily outdoor sessions and the well-organised snack times. The diversity of the children's backgrounds enables them to have a wide variety of cultural experiences and prepares them well for life in Britain today.

Outcomes for children.

All children progress well from their starting points. Most meet or exceed the level of development that is typical for their age and they are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of school:	Ringwood Waldorf School			
Address of school:	Folly Farm Lane, Ashley, Ringwood, Hampshire BH24 2NN			
Telephone number:	01425 472664			
Email address:	mail@ringwoodwaldorfschool.org .uk			
Web address	ringwoodwaldorfschool.org.uk			
Proprietor:	Ringwood Waldorf School			
Person registered with DfE as proprietor under paragraph 20 of Part 4:	Veronica Smith			
Administrator:	Nigel Revill			
DfE Number	835/6022			
Type of school	Independent school associated with the Steiner Fellowship			
Annual fees	£3696 to £7980			
Age range of pupils	3 to 18			
Gender of pupils	Male and female			
Total number on roll	full-time	190	part-time	23
Number of compulsory school age pupils	Boys:	93	Girls:	89
Number of post-compulsory pupils	Boys:	2	Girls:	5
Number of pupils with statements of special educational need	Boys:	0	Girls:	0
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	Boys:	0	Girls:	0
Type of inspection	Section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008			

This report has been prepared by the School Inspection Service, which provides independent professional inspection of all schools affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust, and members of the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship or Cognita group. The report is available from the School Inspection Service website: www.schoolinspectionsservice.co.uk.