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## **STEINER WALDORF SCHOOLS MAKE “SIGNIFICANT EDUCATIONAL TRANSFORMATION”, SAYS NEW STUDY**

A new study by the University of Worcester has commended the “significant educational transformation” of Steiner Waldorf schools in England.

Known worldwide for its distinctive creative and holistic approach, Waldorf education in England faced severe criticism from Ofsted over a two-year period from 2018.

This report, commissioned by Waldorf UK, the national body for Steiner Waldorf (SW) schools, reviews Ofsted and ISI\* reports from 2018 to 2024.

The report highlights that since 2021, inspection findings have improved significantly with inspectors describing how many schools demonstrate:

- **Creative, rich and inclusive curricula**
- **High quality teaching and learning**
- **Good progress in key subjects like reading, mathematics, art and modern foreign languages**
- **High quality Early Years education**
- **Strong teacher–parent relationships**
- **Robust safeguarding and positive school environments**

The authors of the report praise the way Waldorf schools have “transformed criticism into constructive action and in doing so rebuilt public, parental and professional confidence.”

“Steiner Waldorf schools have not only addressed historical failings but have also redefined how they maintain the integrity of Steiner pedagogy while meeting modern regulatory and educational expectations”.

**Fran Russell, Executive Director of Waldorf UK, said:**

“The Ofsted criticisms were tough, leading to deep soul searching and a wholesale review of our educational provision. In turn this has led to new leadership structures, vastly improved professional development and a new curriculum framework.”

“New teacher training partnerships established with universities will help to ensure these developments continue into the future.”

“We still have more to do, but as concern grows that today’s narrow educational focus fuels poor mental health and absenteeism, Waldorf education shows how a more creative curriculum can ease pressure, reduce anxiety, and help children enjoy school which is the golden key to learning.”

## Notes to Editors

### Media contacts – Waldorf UK

Fran Russell, Executive Director (ED) – 07973 323795 | [fran.russell@waldorfeducation.uk](mailto:fran.russell@waldorfeducation.uk)

Valerie McDonough, Operations Manager – [businessops@waldorfeducation.uk](mailto:businessops@waldorfeducation.uk)

Jude Bullen, Assistant to the ED – [admin@waldorfeducation.uk](mailto:admin@waldorfeducation.uk)

### Media contacts - University of Worcester

Dr Carla Solvason (lead researcher)- 07872 489718 | [c.solvason@worc.ac.uk](mailto:c.solvason@worc.ac.uk)

Sally Jones (Head of Press and Public Affairs)- 01905 857511- [press@worc.ac.uk](mailto:press@worc.ac.uk)

**Full Report:** "*Distanced Travelled*" and **Executive Summary** (attached)

**Authors of the Report:** Dr Carla Solvason, Dr Angela Hodgkins, Samantha Sutton-Tsang

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## About Steiner Waldorf Education in the UK and Beyond

- 17 independent SW schools in the UK
- 1 state-funded SW school: **The Steiner Academy Hereford**
- 1,283 Steiner Waldorf schools and 1,922 kindergartens worldwide including USA, Europe, China and Australia

## About the Waldorf Curriculum

- A broad, balanced, interdisciplinary approach integrating art, craft, music, storytelling, movement, maths and science
- Emphasises real-world and project-based learning
- Equal value given to academic and vocational subjects
- Digital skills are introduced later, following hands-on, analogue foundations

The Waldorf approach is recognised worldwide for nurturing curiosity, collaboration, autonomy and lifelong learning—qualities increasingly valued by universities, employers and essential in meeting the challenges of the AI age.

*Note:*

*The terms Steiner, Waldorf, and Steiner Waldorf are used interchangeably.*

*Waldorf UK was formerly known as the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship.*

*\* Independent Schools Inspectorate*

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