We started as a parent and teacher led community project in 1983 in a temporary setting and now have a beautiful home in a four story Victorian building in Balham. We are proud to be a pioneering venture making available the Steiner Waldorf educational approach to our local community. Through the dedicated efforts of staff, parents and supporters our school has grown and developed in a truly organic way. Our relatively small classes and ‘village’ community are additional and valued features of our inner city school. Please pay us a visit and experience it for yourselves.
The Steiner Waldorf School

The Steiner Waldorf School movement was founded by the Austrian scientist and philosopher Rudolf Steiner, in the Autumn of 1919, less than a year after the end of the First World War.

By the turn of the century Steiner had already established himself as an original, albeit unorthodox, thinker within the artistic and intellectual circles of the German-speaking world. His spiritual training and insight made him aware of man’s diminishing ability to healthily assimilate and evaluate new ideas which would serve rather than enslave mankind’s development.

Sharing his concerns, Emil Molt, owner of the Waldorf-Astoria cigarette factory in Stuttgart, invited Steiner to form a new school for the children of the factory employees. Steiner took this opportunity to demonstrate how a school curriculum and teaching methods might be used so as to best develop clarity of thought, sensitivity of feeling and strength of will.

Within a few years this pioneer school was followed by others in Germany, the Netherlands, England and the United States of America. When the National Socialist Party, under Hitler came to power in Germany, all the schools were closed down but were re-opened after the war in 1945.

The 1970s saw a worldwide growth in the Steiner Waldorf School movement which continues today with more than a thousand schools in 60 countries. It is the largest independent educational movement to offer the full range of education for children from 3 to 18 years.

London Steiner School is a registered Charity, founded in 1983 with the intention of making Steiner Waldorf education available to all children regardless of their parents’ means, race, creed or social class. The School is totally dependent on the commitment of teachers, parents and friends.
The Teachers

As Steiner Waldorf teachers we strive to recognise and nourish the individuality that lives within each child. A consciously developed teacher-child relationship and the creation of the harmonious social organism within the class allows the rich Steiner Waldorf curriculum to meet and stimulate the children as they grow through each particular stage of development.

An artistic and imaginative approach to learning awakens interest and enthusiasm in the children, breathing life into what otherwise might become dry academic subjects, and encouraging the children to express themselves in a creative and harmonious way.

As Steiner Waldorf teachers we also endeavour to nourish the sense of wonder and reverence that children bring with them into life – gifts so often undermined by the pace and pressures of modern existence. We strive for high standards of work and behaviour and recognise that alongside an all-round ability and the self-confidence to participate fully in life, children should also take from their school a moral sense of gratitude and responsibility for the earth and for their fellow human beings.
The young child between the ages of 3 and 6 years loves to imitate the adult around her and this healthy imitation is recognised by the Steiner Waldorf Kindergarten teacher as the focus for the child’s learning during these early years. The young child, as she grows into her body, lives particularly in her will-activity and learns enthusiastically through doing.

A clear daily and weekly rhythm blending into the wider rhythms of Festivals and Seasons brings a sense of belonging and security to each child. The activity of the day (crafts, painting, modelling, drawing and baking) is followed by imaginative free play guided by the teachers and helping to prepare the snack. Tidy-up time is followed by circle time with games, songs and Eurythmy (a new art of movement developed by Steiner and his wife) then a peaceful snack time together at the beautifully laid table.

Outdoor play is then followed by a story and sometimes a puppet show. One morning a week is spent outdoors on the common when the children spend time walking and playing in natural surroundings.

The morning usually ends with story time around a lighted candle before the children greet their parents. We strive for a warm, homely atmosphere in the Kindergarten, and natural rather than synthetic materials are chosen for the children’s play and use.

The created environment is as far as possible a beautiful one, within which the children can explore the richness of their own imagination. It is for this reason that finished or mechanical toys are perceived as inappropriate, and the use of electronic and digital media is counterproductive to the healthy imagination we wish to foster in the children.
Our highest endeavour must be to develop free human beings who are able of themselves to impart purpose and direction to their lives

— Marie Steiner
The School Classes

In their seventh year the children take the big step from Kindergarten to School. Here they meet their class teacher who ideally will guide them through the next eight years.

Here too the children are imaginatively introduced for the first time to the mysteries of letter and number. As well as orchestrating a thorough grounding and development of the ‘3 Rs’, the Class teacher will lead the children through fairy story, myth, and legend, to history: from home surroundings and local geography to world geography and astronomy; from nature and animal stories to the phenomenological study of the Sciences: Biology, Zoology, Physics and Chemistry.

The Class teacher’s work also involves the development of freehand Form and Symmetry Drawing through the use of instruments in Geometry. Music, Painting, Imaginative Drawing, Modelling, Games, Crafts and Handwork also form essential parts of the curriculum. Subjects are taught in rhythmically structured Main Lesson periods of 120 minutes every morning for 3 to 4 weeks.

The teacher provides a sense of security and consistent authority that surrounds and holds the growing children in the class. Children are taught in small mixed ability groups in which the strengths of each child are focused for the benefit of the whole class. Pupils’ progress is carefully followed and documented by their teachers in order that areas where each student excels, or where extra assistance would be beneficial, can be identified. As part of this, pupils participate in WRAT (Wide Range Ability Test) testing each year. We cover all subjects in great depth at a developmentally age-appropriate time, paying careful attention to each child’s development. Please see our web site for details of the curriculum.

Specialist teachers are responsible for lessons in Eurythmy, (a new art of movement developed by Rudolf Steiner and his wife), Music and Foreign Languages. The School also provides therapeutic support.
Main lesson - Class 2
The School Community

Early Years Parent & Child Groups (0-3 years)

The Parent and Child Group is a warm, friendly and safe space for parents/carers and children age 0 to 3 and 1/2 years, encouraging self-initiated movement and self-directed play with natural material toys. We celebrate the season through handcrafts, circle time songs and puppet shows. The session is propelled by a gentle rhythm and transitions are nurtured with repetition and reverence. Parenting issues are welcomed and shared with an understanding of Steiner and Pikler respectful care. Sessions are pre-paid per term. For bookings and term timetable please see our website.

After School Club

The after school club consists of two slots: the first one for the Early Years and Class One (from 12:30pm to 3:30pm) and the second one available to all ages (from 3:30pm to 5:30pm). In line with Steiner Waldorf pedagogy we aim to create a calm and peaceful environment in which children can feel happy, confident and safe. Story telling, outdoor and indoor activities and crafts keep the children happily engaged. The after school clubs charge per child per session.

Parents

Class teachers host termly parents’ meetings for their own class. In addition to this, parents are also involved in a wide range of activities that support the school, including Summer and Christmas fairs; fundraising events and craft groups.
Parents Testimonials

“I am very pleased with the education my child had received at the school; I think it has strongly supported his physical, emotional and mental development.”

“Never outside of your kindergarten have I encountered the thoughtful, careful, patient and inspiring teaching that you and your wonderful team provide; the kind of learning that is not measured in ratios and certificates, but is measured in the bright light of inspiration and the deep love of learning seen in the eyes of each and every pupil.”

“Moving to a new secondary school was quite straightforward for my son. During his first year at the new school I was surprisingly often called by the teachers to be informed on how well behaved, caring and friendly my son was as well as how well he was doing in his subjects. The best comment I had from a teacher was how, in her opinion, he would go far with his well developed social skills, compared to other peers in his school. At London Steiner School children are taught all these skills in their day-to-day interaction with the teachers, the younger pupils and the local community. I think it’s invaluable how holistic education methods, such as Steiner Waldorf education, can set children up for life in the best possible way.”

“Coming to this school doesn’t mean just coming to learn, it means coming to participate in something much bigger than just a school.”
Application Procedure

1. Parents visit School with or without the child.
2. Parents submit application, with previous school reports.
3. Class teacher interviews the children and parents.
4. Commitment interview for parents.

Interviews for the Kindergarten are less formal, but all children are interviewed by their prospective class teacher before entering Class 1.

If you don't find an application form with this prospectus please contact the school on 020 8772 3504 or download it from our website.

Financial and Practical Commitment

Entrance to the School is by individual interview. Although the financial contributions compare favourably with most independent schools, parents are also expected to contribute their time and skills. Their responsibilities are agreed during the individual Commitment interview. Financial contributions may be determined on a sliding scale if warranted by circumstances.

The College of Teachers

The leadership, management and administration of the School remains the responsibility of the central group or College of Teachers, which has a chairperson selected by rotation. There is no head teacher in the School. College of Teachers and Faculty of Teachers meet weekly. These meetings are the heart of the School organism and all the teachers are asked to attend.

School Council

As well as being a Registered Charity, the School is also a Company limited by guarantee with a group of trustees. These Trustees form part of an advisory council for the School, which meets with members of the College of Teachers once or twice a term.
Google Execs and other Silicon Valley Bigwigs send their Kids to a Waldorf School.

NY Times