Setting Our Direction 2018-2022
Awakening Together in 21st Century South Devon

Iteration of 10 January 2018
Foreword

A great deal has happened since the first “strategic plan” of this kind was developed two years ago in the spring term of 2016: seismic shifts unfolding in the world around us have been mirrored by major changes within our school.

We made great progress in extricating our school from a financial crisis which had its peak in the summer of 2015. We have taken steps to work more effectively with the layers of rules and regulations which surround all educational establishments. We make progress on this while striving to manage an organisation independently and as free from political and corporate influence as possible. We have also grappled with our idealism which can get in the way of running an effective school. We remain privately funded and still aspire to make our education available to as wide a community as possible.

Our journey is one of becoming a more consciously joined-up, professionally managed organisation which is able to protect and nourish the space for our idealism.

This documents both identifies some of what we have achieved since 2016 and what we still need to do.

It is not intended to be a detailed action plan or even a high-level strategic plan in the traditional organisational sense. Its goal is to set an overall direction and act as the brief and source of ideas and ambitions from which we develop our goals, plans and priorities.

This is a living resource and we welcome your input into its further development.

Mark Drewell
Chairman of the Board of Trustees
10 January 2018
A Desire for Purpose

We wish for these articulations to help us set our common direction and to enable us to stand together united under one realistic picture and with a sense of attainable purpose that enables us to work with joy to the same end and vision.

Process

In 2016 we published a first iteration of this document. It was initially developed in draft by the School Management Team working with College and Council and then refined in a series of staff and community workshops and consultations. In this process we consciously expressed our gratitude for the beginnings and history of our school and put forward our wishes for its future.

In the autumn of 2017 we began a process to update this work through a review by the School Management Team and the College of Management followed by a preliminary review and approval by the Council of Trustees.

Our Ideals, Values, Vision and Mission

Our process of defining our vision went through distinct stages and was actively held by College.

We started with a big blank canvas and drew together our ideals. These we developed into values that have a very specific relationship with each other.

Out of these emerged our mission and vision.

Ideals

Truth, Beauty and Goodness

The first set of ideals is perhaps best summarised as Truth, Beauty and Goodness and encompasses a collection of ideals that foster a healthy emotional and intellectual life. Amongst these ideals are:

- Liberal arts education
- Analytical, creative and flexible thinking
- Vigorous academics
- Comprehensive artistic training
- Kindness & compassion
- Gratitude & reverence
- Humour & play
Social Renewal

The second set of ideals is around the theme of Social Renewal which manifests itself through our actions. We would like to think that Waldorf education exerts a healing force in the world through:

• Sustainability of humankind
• Service to others
• Care of self
• Stewardship of Earth
• Work in partnership with parents & greater urban community
• Inclusiveness
• Personal responsibility, integrity & courage

Organisational Integrity

The third and final set of ideals comes under the heading of Organisational Integrity which requires us to be thoughtful in the way we organise and run our school:

• Transparent policies which reflect a Steiner Waldorf school ethos
• Informed decision-making through orientation towards educational aims, material realities and compliance as well as through consultation where possible and appropriate
• Governing bodies & individuals working in partnership
• Professionalism & collegiality

Values

We identified four values which are central to our school. The values relate to each other in a structured way; our sense of community and our practice of inner work support the living Waldorf curriculum at the centre of our school which in turn supports the aim to provide purposeful journeys into life.

Inner Work

It requires space and time to do inner reflective work as individuals and in study groups. But inner work extends beyond this: it involves getting enough sleep, seeking to express an authentic sense of self and not simply relying on “Rudolf Steiner said...” in pursuit of the question of what is authentic and real here and now in this place at this point in time. It is the main tool for teachers and perhaps it should be essential for the quality all of our personal lives, the life of our school and community that we create, maintain and hold dear this space and time.
Community of People, Animals and Land

Our geographical place, the people, the animals on our campus and the land around us, how we relate to each other and how we relate to the wider world makes this place and our school unique. The way we run the school is sensitive to and respects our genius loci.

The Living Waldorf Curriculum

Steiner Waldorf education (or Waldorf education as it is known in most countries outside of the UK) is based on an understanding of child development that has its roots in a philosophy known as ‘anthroposophy’. The educational content of anthroposophy informs the work of the teachers; it is not a belief system and is not taught in Steiner schools.

Purposeful Journey into Life

Steiner Waldorf education has a proven track record for providing a sound and practical basis for working with children, enabling them to find their creativity and to become free individuals who can think for themselves, make their own judgements and find their own purpose and direction in life. We also aspire to role modelling in the way we create and maintain an active and productive community life around the school with all its frustrations and joys.
Mission

Our mission is to make possible the experience of life as a purposeful journey on which everyone – children and adults alike – may discover their gifts and talents, and their capacity to bring relevant and worthwhile contributions to the world. We do this on the basis of Rudolf Steiner’s humanitarian Waldorf curriculum through which we awaken and inspire our pupils’ and students’ critical thinking, emotional intelligence and artistic expression.

Vision

Our work is guided by the vision of the whole human being in every individual who we welcome into our midst by taking children on a journey through the stages of their development and into a purposeful adult life.

To this end we strive to provide beautiful, cohesive school grounds and facilities which radiate learning, working and playing while attracting and expanding full and diverse enrolment supported by abundant resources.

We enthusiastically work and serve in the world community as stewards of social renewal.
Towards a Consciously Joined-Up Organisation

Our ideals, values, vision and mission describe our ambition to role model and bring forth self-confident, thriving change agents who challenge the status quo in a productive and human way.

The Waldorf curriculum and its understanding of child (and human) development offers an approach as to how to go about this: the curriculum takes the child through the stages of child development as it journeys through the stages of human development.

Taking this idea, we are able to say that the challenge of managing our school in 21st century England perhaps is also a question of human development.

While we may disagree with aspects of the status quo we operate in, it is nonetheless our current stage of human consciousness and disagreement in itself does not remove the fact that, ultimately, compliance is not optional.

Furthermore, College and SMT are striving for our school to be an example of Steiner Waldorf education that integrates regulatory compliance and best-practice Waldorf education. Our ambition is to become an outstanding school by 2021. In so doing we will enhance our ability to illustrate the benefits of this form of education for the development of able young people in service to humankind in small and big ways, according to their personal ability and vision.

What we have identified as the keys to our forward journey are:

1) A deep **consciousness of inner factors** (our ideals and approach) and an articulation fit for 21st century England

2) An equal **consciousness of what the external factors** that affect us are – from financial via demographic to legal frameworks, rules and regulations.

3) The capacity for and exercising of **joined-up thinking**.

4) The ability to maintain an **agile and adaptable organisation** with **reliable processes** and an appetite for **informed decision making**.

These are, in our view, the ingredients with which we can ground our idealism in 21st century England through earning respect, appreciation and understanding for what we are trying to achieve. We believe that this approach has brought and continues to bring a much-
needed shift in the inner mood of our community from “entrenched resistance” to “creative and productive engagement and transcendence”.

Objectives and Goals

Our strategic plan has three focus areas within which we have identified strategic objectives and goals. The focus areas are:

1. Education
2. Leadership, Management and Organisation
3. Fundraising, Business Development and Volunteering

It should be noted that whereas two years ago, administration and financial issues were the first item on the list, education has now moved to the top.

The reason for this is that while other aspects remain important, we have made sufficient progress that we can place greater emphasis on the development of our educational offering while not of course neglecting other areas.

In the sections which follow we look at each focus area in detail, addressing three aspects:

- Our commitment in that area
- The guiding question for the area
- The practical objectives on which we need to take action (coloured purple) and those we have achieved since the first version of this plan was initiated in 2016 (coloured green).

- New objectives that were not in the 2016 document are identified with the word NEW attached to them.
**Focus Area 1: Education**

**Commitment:** Maintaining our idealism and ensuring the continued enrichment of the school's educational life balanced by a full awareness of and respect for regulatory requirements starting with the Independent School Standards.

**Guiding question:** How can we provide a learning experience for children that prepares them to thrive intellectually, socially, emotionally, physically and spiritually in the 21st century?

**Objective E1:** Better resource education
- Education support for SEN, AGT, maths and literacy
- Class room materials
- More time and better pay for staff
- Address crumbling infrastructure:
  - Pottery
  - Forge
  - Lab
  - Refurbish Class 9/10
  - Tarpaulin Greenwood turning area
  - Keep the facilities update for KG going

**Objective E2:** Establish class 11 and 12 with a robust and rigorous Waldorf curriculum
- Costings, recruitment, staffing and regulatory approval: **COMPLETED**
- Launch class 11 in September 2017: **COMPLETED**
- Launch class 12 in September 2018

**Objective E3:** PRIORITY Explore, plan and implement separation of Lower School
- (class 1 to 8) into Lower School (1 – 6) and
- Middle School (7 and 8)

**Objective E4:** Review Learning Support and develop a new vision  
**COMPLETED 2017**

**Objective E5:** Put reflective practice (inner work) at the heart of professional development for staff
- Reducing the pace and pressure during term-time → see Focus Area: Management and Organisation
- Create more space and time for individual and group inner work and study **PARTIALLY COMPLETED 2017**
Objective E6: Articulate our picture of child development fully integrated across the school from early years to class 12 and fit for 21st century England

- Create regular workshops that inform parents and community
- New articulation to help teachers to communicate more easily with parents across the departments
- This will help all members of staff as well as the parent body and wider community to understand why and how we do what we do

Objective E7: Develop the curriculum implementation and focus areas

- Review, update and implement the school development and improvement plan annually
- Improve the provision for and develop a clear framework for maths across the school
- Improve the provision for Eurythmy

Objective E8: Establish Steiner teacher training similar to Michael Hall School

- Drastically improve our teacher mentoring provision
- Improves cover situation
- Can help with learning support work
- Enables Afternoon Care expansion
- Supports a greater level of Teaching Assistants

Objective E9: Expand Early Years provision

- Create a dedicated Parent & Child facility
- Expand back into fourth kindergarten as feeder for stable school from class 1 to class 12
Focus Area 2: Leadership, Management and Organisation

**Commitment:** We will rapidly and radically become a more effective school and improve our capacity to secure and manage resources, uphold processes and make decisions.

**Guiding question:** How can we secure and allocate the necessary (financial) resources to provide an exemplary education with suitable facilities and organisational forms that support and enhance the curriculum?

**Objective L1:** Integrate regulatory compliance and best-practice Waldorf education (NEW)

- What can we realistically achieve?
- How can we do this?
- Humility & honesty in the face of our resources and ambitions
- Not compliance for compliance’s sake but because it allows us to continue Waldorf education in the 21st century

**Objective L2:** Radically rethink our approach to administration

- **COMPLETED 2017:** Review the capacity and capabilities of the administration
- **COMPLETED 2017:** Implement appropriate management systems (SIMS, HR/Personnel, Health & Safety, record keeping)
  - Improve communication on all levels
  - Develop accessible school calendars for festivals, term dates and facilities bookings
- **COMPLETED 2017:** Outsource and collaborate health & safety and personnel
- **COMPLETED 2017:** Develop a nimble, proactive administration that supports the education and has the capacity to implement the strategic plan
- Manage the school towards an excellent delivery of the Waldorf curriculum, “outstanding” school inspections, financial sustainability and rewarding community experience

**Objective L3:** Improving processes and decision making across the whole school

- **COMPLETED 2017:** Continue organisational development following successful implementation of College (holds the purpose, heart and soul of the school, consulting body for SMT) and SMT (responsibility to ensure that all aspects of the school are happening) as well as School Administrator role into management of departments EY, LS and US through clearly mandated and accountable department chairs with responsibility for department and authority to make decisions
- **COMPLETED 2017:** Continue to create a more join-up organisational
roles and responsibilities through ongoing governance and management best practice reviews, training and research

**Objective L4:** Enable better pay and improve employment benefits for all paid employees

- **COMPLETED 2017:** Create a simple means-tested Staff School Fees policy to be part of the employment package following independent school best practice (as per other Steiner Waldorf schools and HMRC guidelines)
- Improve teacher salaries by 2022 towards a full-time salary of £25,000 (ahead of inflation) – last pay rise for teachers in 2015-16 (full-time class teachers currently paid £19,500)
- Action overdue non-teaching staff pay review

**Objective L5:** Ensure the financial sustainability of the school

- **COMPLETED 2017:** Implement financial best practices
  - Continue programme of improving financial policies and procedures
- Research into relevant funding streams
  - Develop bursary endowment fund
  - Develop fundraising programmes to attract funding for new infrastructure
- Develop and implement annual marketing plan that focuses on recruitment and retention
  - Grow school to 290 pupils by summer 2019 (current capacity registered with DfE)
  - Revisit Open Days & PPAs
- **COMPLETED 2017:** Develop a simplified and more effective budget that gives a better financial overview and improved control
- **COMPLETED 2017:** Develop a financial aid programme to make the education more accessible to all families
  - Develop Bursary Fund that will reduce the variance from 26% to 20%, i.e. 6% of budget – achieved but not solely through bursary fund
- **COMPLETED 2017:** Review financial contributions
  - Develop new agreements while maintaining sensitivity to existing arrangements - £1,000,000 parent debt (summer 2015) now under management

**Objective L6:** Release latent capacity within the organisation

- Move towards fewer and more full-time staff
- Developing a clear annual cycle across all levels from governance to class room level including parents’ meetings, parents’ evenings, class trips, festivals
- Allowing term time activity to focus more on teaching (for teachers)
- Reduce holidays from 15-17 weeks to 10-12 14 (?) weeks holiday:
less stressful term time (also acknowledges the reality that class teachers don’t take 17 weeks holiday and work in their holiday!)

- Move (where possible) planning, curriculum development, professional development, organisational development, annual/termly tasks such as policy reviews and administrative tasks into this additional time
- **COMPLETED December 2017: Recruit School Education Manager**

**Objective L7:** Develop our teaching and admin spaces, grounds and gardens in line with our financial ability and strategic requirements

- **COMPLETED 2017:** Complete the Gateway Project
  - **COMPLETED 2017:** Get the RHI payments right
  - **COMPLETED 2017:** Complete and rename the building formerly known as the Bunkhouse
    - **COMPLETED 2017:** Focus on classrooms on 1st floor
  - **COMPLETED 2017:** Move the maintenance shed to the new dedicated building off the turning circle
- **COMPLETED 2017:** Refurbish/ replace marquee
- **COMPLETED 2017:** Refurbish/ upgrade polytunnel in Outdoor Classroom
- **COMPLETED 2017:** Meet school regulations and DfE requirements ref shower and changing facilities as per last school inspection failure
- **NEW** Rethink our site development master plan and cost infrastructure development to attract funding
- Build new eurythmy hall space
- Free up Greenwood Hall for drama and movement
- Amphitheatre with tiered seating and sail structure in place of old marquee for community activities, sports/games, outdoor drama
- **NEW** Develop Arts & Crafts Village
- **NEW** Develop dedicated Parent and Child Space
- Build new class rooms for class 1 and 2
- Develop Administration Block and Staff Room
- Improve the parking situation

**Objective L8:** PRIORITY Expand care provision

- **NEW:** Consolidate length of school days and currently three pick-up times (12:30pm, 3pm and 3:45pm)
- Develop afternoon care until 6pm including hot meals by way of afternoon clubs and integrate with teacher training programme
- Develop summer camps also as taster sessions for Waldorf education
- Consider opportunities with other organisations here
- Hire purchase school bus and offer pick-up and drop-off service
Focus Area 3: Fundraising, Business Development and Volunteering

Commitment: Creating a Productive and Rewarding Community Experience by Extending the School’s Core Provision, Reinventing Volunteering and Professionalising Fundraising Activities

Guiding question: How can we foster and support a community that supports our mission through volunteering, charitable giving, advocacy, outreach, and business activity?

Objective F1: NEW Establish (core-)fundraising capacity
- Capacity to engage with grants and manage larger fundraising campaigns

Objective F2: Re-energise and mobilise the community and parental involvement but in a format suited to the circumstances of 21st century South Devon, safeguarding regulations and which considers other strategic objectives
- Build on PTA: There is a perceptible shift with regard to volunteer engagement.
- Is it a good idea for the PTA to become the PFA (no direct connection with staff in College or SMT)
- Put in place comprehensive induction processes at each level of the school as well as for new entrants
- Establish parental development programme parallel to children’s journey focussed on enhancing understanding of the Waldorf approach to child development
- Enhance communication to develop an informed and proud community of current and alumni parents, students and supporters of the school
  - Launch alumni association in 2018/19?
- Increase parental engagement through the provision of structured and supported volunteering opportunities
- Engage community in upkeep of grounds and gardens
- Guided by the formal engagement with the school through PTA

Objective F3: Reach out into the wider community
- Strengthen and promote the school’s partnerships with other organisations in the wider community
- Develop the school’s “for hire” programme outside of term time