

PRESS RELEASE, 1 SEPTEMBER 2009 - WYNSTONES STEINER SCHOOL GAINS EXEMPTION FROM ELEMENTS OF THE EYFS

Wynstones School, an independent co-educational school offering Steiner Waldorf education for 3-18 year olds, has now received a reply from the Secretary of State to its application for exemption from some of the learning and development requirements of the EYFS (the so-called 'nappy curriculum').

The requested exemptions and modifications related to literacy and to ICT have been granted. However, those relating to the teaching of maths have not. Likewise, the request for exemption from the EYFS's assessment arrangements has been rejected.

The school continues to have concerns about the target driven nature of the EYFS and in particular the assessment arrangements. It does not believe that the EYFS assessment arrangements are appropriate, particularly for children of this age. Many of the 13 assessment scales include goals that we have been exempted from so it is not clear how we would use these in any case. The school has not had the opportunity to speak with the QCA yet before considering its next course of action.

We are pleased that, in granting us exemptions and modifications, the Secretary of State has recognised that the EYFS is not flexible enough to accommodate the Steiner Waldorf Early Years practice. We had to fight long and hard for an exemption process in the face of the DCSF's insistence that the EYFS was flexible enough to cater for Steiner Early Year needs. While the exemption process was allowed for in the original act (The Childcare Act 2006), the DCSF failed to introduce it until the last minute after we, and others, raised strong, vociferous and sustained objections.

There continues to be widespread criticism of the target driven EYFS from many early years professionals (see the OpenEye campaign) and despite these exemptions we are looking forward to the promised review of the EYFS in 2010. The school has the full support of its parents in its view that the learning goals and assessment regime of the EYFS are incompatible with its educational philosophy.

Wynstones School has been running successfully for over 70 years in Gloucestershire and is one of the UK's most well established Steiner schools. The school provides a creative learning environment based on a strong core curriculum where lessons include a balance of artistic, practical and intellectual content appropriate to the child's stage of development. "Wynstones School offers a good quality of education [where] pupils grow into confident, mature young people who are well prepared to go out into the adult world. They enjoy their education and have positive views about the school." (OFSTED report 2007).

Wynstones School
www.wynstones.com

Further EYFS details available on our campaign website
<http://www.savesteinerschools.org/>