



# The London Waldorf Seminar

Steiner Waldorf Teacher Training and Professional Development

## LONDON WALDORF SEMINAR TEACHER TRAINING COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course comprises 500 contact hours over 2 years, including a 7-day summer intensive between years 1 and 2, and a 3-day intensive at the end of the course. In addition, students must complete a minimum of 3 weeks' or 30 hours of observation and a further 3 weeks/30 hours of teaching practice in a Steiner Waldorf school.

### CERTIFICATION

London Waldorf Seminar graduates who become successful Waldorf teachers are working at least at the same level of skill as a NQT with a PGCE. Some of our graduates are best qualified to work in Lower (primary) School settings, working academically at Level 3 or 4; others are more than able to teach in Upper (secondary) School and tertiary education at levels 5, 6 and even 7. Teaching practice placements will reflect this and certification is usually awarded in a particular area. Details of experience and teaching practice are given in the covering letter that accompanies each certificate.

Certification is offered at 3 levels:

- Certificate of Attendance: the student has attended at least 90% of contact hours.
- Certificate of Successful Completion: in addition to the above, the student has completed all assignments, has observed in Steiner Waldorf classes for at least 30 hours and has prepared and taught at least 30 hours of practice lessons in a Steiner Waldorf school.
- Diploma in Steiner Waldorf Education: in addition to the above, the student has successfully completed a year (at least 350 hours) teaching in a Steiner Waldorf school and this has been verified.

Each certificate is issued with a course description and a covering letter, detailing the individual student's achievements and experience, as well as any areas that need, or are suggested for, continuing development. These form part of the certificate and should be read in conjunction with it.

Teaching is a vocation to which not everyone is suited; it is important to acknowledge that completion of any training course cannot guarantee that the certificate holder is, or will become, a good teacher.

### ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Suitability for the course is dependent on previous education and skills, together with life experience.

A good general academic background (full-time education to age 18 at least) is assumed for those intending to teach.

Upper Schools (age 15 - 18) usually require graduates in their respective subjects, although professional expertise is also taken into account and, in some cases, for example for those wishing to teach practical arts, may be more significant than formal qualifications.

This enables all curriculum sessions to concentrate on what is specifically 'Waldorf' in teaching, using content to illustrate principles, rather than providing the content itself, which would be impossible in a part-time course and is, in any case, not specifically prescribed.

### COURSE STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

The teacher training seminar aims to provide a practical, artistic and theoretical grounding in Steiner Waldorf education that is essential for anyone wishing to teach in a Waldorf school. There are three main strands to the course; interwoven with the aim of sounding keynotes that will resonate on through the teacher's development:

**1. Child Development:** in-depth study of the development of human consciousness in the individual; and how its parallel in the history of humankind is reflected in the curriculum, to support the child's development at each stage.

In the first year, the focus is to develop a sound understanding of the phases of development experienced through childhood to adulthood and, in the second year, a detailed understanding of the period from 6 to 18 years.

Study of child development is supported by courses in the Evolution of Consciousness through the History of Literature and arts, and in classroom methodology and practice. All courses employ a creative approach to developing students' practical, artistic and thinking skills for education.

**2. Study:** study of Rudolf Steiner's education and other lectures supports and deepens understanding of Anthroposophy as the basis of Steiner Waldorf education with the aim of developing the skill of thinking as an art of education. Essential texts are 'The Education of the Child' in the first year, with 'The Foundations of Human Experience' in the second year. These are supplemented by a variety of other lecture cycles, single lectures and passages from other books, including some by other authors.

Study of the Festivals of the year, through lectures and practical and artistic workshops on their cultural and age-appropriate celebration, is also an important part of the curriculum.

**3. Artistic Development (teacher development):** Steiner Waldorf teachers are artists. Steiner identified the three studies of Modelling, Music and Speech as essential for developing the skills and qualities most needed in the classroom. Music is taken in the form of choral singing, music theory and recorder playing; Speech in recitation, storytelling, speech and drama; Modelling in clay work, form drawing and eurythmy. These link with the regular sessions in painting, drawing and handwork as well as various other artistic activities taken from time to time. Artistic development also links in with Child Development through the classroom and curriculum practice sessions: classroom music, drawing and painting, gym and games for the various age-stages, for example.

These three strands continue throughout the course with a change of emphasis from the first to the second year so that students gain a good balance of theory and practice along with their continuing personal development.

In the first year the focus is on laying the foundations: study of Child Development and development of the qualities and skills needed for teaching.

In the second year, we work more intensively with putting the theory of Child Development into practice in preparation for school teaching placements and embarking on life as a teacher; curriculum study and practice focuses approximately on Classes 1 - 5 in the first term, 6 - 8 in the second and 9 - 12 in the third, comprising about 30% of the second year contact hours overall.

**Assignments:** Mandatory assignments for course completion include the keeping of a Main Lesson book in the first year and the writing and presenting of an independent research project in the second year. In addition, there are homework tasks set by individual tutors throughout the year in preparation for lessons, and students are encouraged to practise artistic activities as much as possible; taking responsibility for the development of personal qualities and skills through independent work calls for the kind of commitment that is in any case an essential requisite for teaching.

**Summer School:** The week-long summer school usually takes place from Saturday to Friday at some point in July or August and includes intensive courses and workshops in things that can't be done in weekly sessions. It also provides an opportunity for each student to review the past year individually with the course directors and to plan ahead.

**Teaching Observation and Practice:** Observation and teaching practice must be completed in addition to the time specified for general seminar work. Observation can be spread out over a period and is usually undertaken during the first year of training. Teaching practice is normally in blocks of three weeks during the second and third terms of the second year, but can be done later if necessary.

Students are advised not to arrange their own placements directly with schools but to do so through the designated tutor, so that the course directors can ensure they have the best possible opportunity and that it is a positive experience for student, school and children alike.

Both observation and practice are mandatory with a minimum of three weeks (fifteen days) for each. However it is our aim and responsibility to ensure that our students are properly prepared for teaching and so we often make specific recommendations to individuals with regard to the kind and amount of observation and teaching practice they need to do. Contact with schools enables progress to be monitored and reports made. Students are also expected to write reports of their school placements, as well as their own reflections on their professional development.

**Course Completion and Assessment:** Each seminar subject is taught by a specialist tutor who monitors individual student progress in their sessions and tutorials with the course directors enable the development of individual student profiles over the 2 years, including reports from each student's observation and practice school placements.

At the end of the first year, during the summer school, students meet with the course directors individually to review the year and to plan their path through the second year, including the research project and teaching practice placements.

At the end of the second year, there is a review meeting between the student and the course directors at which the whole profile is assessed in conversation with the student. At this meeting, levels of achievement as well as the student's next steps are informally agreed, in preparation for the graduation ceremony, where each student receives the relevant certificate and/or a letter describing the outstanding tasks agreed at the review meeting.

It is often the case that students have outstanding course requirements to fulfil. These may include: making up attendance, completing the personal project, observation, teaching practice, or attending more seminar sessions to strengthen skills in a specific area.

The appropriate certificate is awarded once the student has met the requirements (see above) The seminar directors will seek verification from the school before issuing a Diploma<sup>1</sup>.

The overall level aimed at by the seminar directors is fitness to successfully fulfil the requirements of a teaching position in a Steiner Waldorf school, given the expected and necessary in-school support for new teachers. As has been said, no training can guarantee that its certificate holders are, or will become, good teachers; potential employers are strongly advised to contact the seminar directors in every case via the contact form on the website at [www.waldorftraining.org](http://www.waldorftraining.org) for verbal and written references, and this is reiterated on every certificate issued.

Our students come from diverse backgrounds and each makes an individual learning path through his/her experience of the seminar. Our aim is to educate 'hearts' and 'hands', as well as 'heads', firmly believing in a balanced education of the whole person at every stage of life.

Amanda Bell & Josie Alwyn  
Co-directors London Waldorf Seminar  
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<sup>1</sup> Certification from the London Waldorf Seminar will be accepted as qualification to teach in Steiner/Waldorf schools worldwide, but it is important to note that in some countries, the state requires that teachers in all schools, including Steiner/Waldorf schools, have a state teacher training. Further information about this can be obtained from the national association/federation of Waldorf schools in each country.