

# We are IntechOpen, the world's leading publisher of Open Access books Built by scientists, for scientists

4,200

Open access books available

116,000

International authors and editors

125M

Downloads

Our authors are among the

154

Countries delivered to

TOP 1%

most cited scientists

12.2%

Contributors from top 500 universities



WEB OF SCIENCE™

Selection of our books indexed in the Book Citation Index  
in Web of Science™ Core Collection (BKCI)

Interested in publishing with us?  
Contact [book.department@intechopen.com](mailto:book.department@intechopen.com)

Numbers displayed above are based on latest data collected.  
For more information visit [www.intechopen.com](http://www.intechopen.com)



# Principles of Equality: Managing Equality and Diversity in a Steiner School

*Robin Attfield and Kate Attfield*

## Abstract

Principles of equality are examined in the context of managing equality and diversity in practice. Our case study is the Cardiff Steiner School, an independent international school located in Wales, UK with educational values guided by the philosophers and educationalists Rudolf Steiner and Millicent Mackenzie. The sustainable management referred to and assessed in this chapter is the School's management structure and the related School pedagogical operation, with the founding Steiner value of human justice informing these. We argue that at this School the management of equality and diversity reflects theories of Diversity and Equality Management, with School managers aspiring to encourage respect for all. We appraise the philosophical and spiritual values of the founders in relation to equality and diversity, in order to demonstrate the visionary ideals of these philosophers and the extent to which their beliefs live on sustainably in contemporary society, and particularly in a Steiner education community.

**Keywords:** principles of equality, equality of consideration, Rudolf Steiner's philosophy of education, Millicent Mackenzie, Steiner school equality and diversity management practices

## 1. Introduction

When people talk about 'the principle of equality' in the abstract, what they really mean depends on which version or variety of equality they have in mind. Indeed there is a whole array of different principles (see [1, 2]). Prominent principles include equality of opportunity and equality of consideration, while equality of treatment and equality of outcome will also receive mention. In this chapter, management examples are brought to bear, to illustrate pertinent issues about equality and diversity, examples that are drawn from the Welsh independent school, the Cardiff Steiner School. These issues are found to be raised by or around its equality and diversity policy (itself comprising part of our case study), as well as its core collaborative management and unique pedagogical system. The underlying established values of the School are discussed in the case study, examining examples of the management of: the School's daily practices, the School's qualification and the School mandate structure, all of which illustrate the fundamental grounding of these examples in equality and diversity.

We suggest that the selected principles of equality are worthy of discussion against an underlying Steiner philosophical education backdrop that both values innovative thinking and expresses such thinking itself. While not flawless (because some of Steiner's approach to teaching is considered outdated and unsuitable in today's terms), Steiner propounded the core value of mutual reverence between children and teachers in connection with a teaching and learning operation, and this can be explored in today's terms in relation to equality and diversity. Issues arising within the School community as well as issues of the wider society relating to equality and diversity illustrate and challenge the principles of equality mentioned above, principles, that is, of equality of opportunity, treatment, outcome and consideration.

Our methodology is interdisciplinary, comprising a blend of methods. These include philosophical analysis, used to sift principles of equality and related understandings of diversity, specification of some contextually relevant legislation, and a sociological case study of the application of relevant principles of Rudolf Steiner and Millicent Mackenzie in the Cardiff Steiner School, conducted through a review of sample School management structures and practices, supported by interviews in the form of informal personal communications. There is a literature from Diversity and Equality Management; we draw on this, and on principles of equality, stemming from the work of Peter Singer in this field [2], as well as the earlier work of Michael Young [3]. Out of the extensive literature on Steiner, relevant works are limited to those with a bearing on education and related principles, as opposed to his works in several other fields, including those of business and medicine. Little has been written about Millicent Mackenzie, but, as we shall argue, her work and characteristic stance as a Professor of (what later became) Cardiff University helped generate not only the existence but also the ethos of the Cardiff Steiner School. What has not been done previously is to bring together some widely recognised principles of equality and diversity with the philosophy of education of Rudolf Steiner and of Millicent Mackenzie, and with their concrete application in a particular school and its sustainable management. The research question we are addressing is whether a defensible principle of equality which at the same time provides appropriately for diversity can be successfully integrated into the management of a school, with positive educational outcomes. On this interdisciplinary undertaking, a blend of philosophy, sociology, and theories of education and management, we now embark.

## **2. The distinctive field and context of this research**

### **2.1 The case study**

We have selected a case study for our research in order to assess the management of equality and diversity in a single setting, and to examine principles of equality, and the principle of equality of consideration as the prevalent interpretation of equality in this instance. The Cardiff Steiner School is an 'exemplifying case' where particular research questions can be posed, and social processes identified and analysed [4]. The case study embodies the philosophical and educational values of Steiner and of Mackenzie in their seeming visionary views of reverence and educational autonomy and a complex bridging of the modern-day values of equality and diversity. We scrutinise the School equality and diversity policy, selected daily School practices, the School's qualification, and the management and leadership structure of the School, in accordance with the human resources management system of Diversity and Equality Management. The case in question is opportune

in both its complexity, its particular nature and its locality. We do not claim that the case study is representative, but rather that some aspects are transferable to other cases; what can be seen as useful is the theory that emerges from our findings [5, 6].

## **2.2 Literature**

Strategic human resources management theory has supported the implementation of DEM (Diversity and Equality Management) practice since the (American) Civil Rights Act 1964 [7]. Recent research argues that DEM, and so widened diversity, to some degree facilitates improved performance. Three recent examples of sustainable management research studies, those of Richard et al. [7], Konrad et al. [8] and Ali and Konrad [9], each assess a different social group of women, minority ethnic and disabled people, and the potential outcomes of diversity advancement. The three given reasons for DEM are compliance with legality, the gaining of symbolic acceptance, and the accelerating of organisational performance.

In our case, the legality aspect is significant, with the (UK) Equality Act, as well as Welsh Government regulations, needing to be complied with. The second element is symbolic legitimacy, i.e., the organisation's perceived emphasis on diversity to justify its purpose, which derives from the prevalent cultural values and knowledge of the relevant community. The third component is about exhibiting a diverse employee cohort, as representative of the customer base (in our case the local and international community). Here, diverse representation and its assumed empathy with the customer base enable productivity and innovation at a strategic level; this is 'a business case for diversity' [7, 9].

Konrad et al. [8] examine how DEM is implemented, in accordance with one's own perceived organisational climate. They find a disconnection between theory and practice, where diversity strategies do not link to business aims. An example of the introduction of diversity into the workplace is gender mainstreaming. Lombardo and Meier [10] explain that where organisations are new, and where senior management is favourably disposed, gender mainstreaming is easier to initiate. De Boise [11] argues that gender mainstreaming has sometimes failed across Europe, when women are not appointed to decision-making positions where they can make a real impact; their (token) presence is not sufficient in generating such value. Richard et al. [7] similarly discuss the short-sightedness of a 'one size fits all' approach, and the lack of meaning in its implementation if token diversity is the extent of the programme. The management literature is considered as a point of reference throughout this chapter.

## **2.3 The philosophy of education of Rudolf Steiner and of Millicent Mackenzie**

The School's world-view is based on the far-sighted teachings of Rudolf Steiner, the Austrian philosopher and educator (1861–1925). The first Steiner School (otherwise known as Waldorf School) was established in Germany in 1919. Steiner's ideas for education were founded on recognising the development of humankind (human individuals) according to his ideals of 'Liberty', one part of the 'Threefold Social Order' reinterpreted by Steiner in 1919. 'Liberty' meant the promotion of free-thinking culture, religion and education, 'Equality' would guide the equitable legal system, and 'Fraternity' would inform reciprocal economic life [12]. The three concepts diverge noticeably from one another, and more importantly from more modern conceptions of equality, and so it is his ideas for liberty in education that we focus on here. Steiner advocated the natural play and natural conceptual development of children, notions that remain different from those of mainstream State education. According to Steiner's philosophy, children develop within three distinct seven-year periods, hence the three stages of education, kindergarten

(willing through imitation), lower school (feeling through imagination) and upper school (thinking through authority) [13]. For Steiner, learning was fundamentally linked to dignity and respect; it involved inviting children to learn as individuals, and encouraging their maturing emotional and intellectual development through creativity [14]. The high regard and value given by teachers to learners (as well as to their colleagues) can be seen in modern terms as an interpretation of a type of just treatment. This will be explored in depth below.

In 1904, Millicent Mackenzie (1863–1942) became the first woman to be appointed Professor in England and Wales, at Cardiff University. She was another philosopher and educator, and in addition established the regional Suffragettes of Cardiff, and the University Settlement of Cardiff. Mackenzie asserted values of the meaningful equal worth of human beings, particularly in relation to women, and to children. She can be seen as another visionary thinker of her time [15]. It was because Mackenzie directly responded to Steiner's entreaty for the chance to trial his educational philosophy, that Steiner education became established first in the UK, and thereafter worldwide. She invited him to an education conference in 1922 in Oxford, and consequently the second Steiner school anywhere was founded in 1925 [16]. Again, her values and campaigns are explored later in the chapter.

Mackenzie was neither messenger nor administrative facilitator; she was a visionary educationalist with independent values which complemented those of Steiner. She believed in freedom in education for children; in creativity and in recognising their developing autonomy, based on their wider sense of spiritual awareness. Her underlying value was of meaningful equality and deference towards children [17]. We discuss Mackenzie's significance partly because in parallel to other academic disciplines, women have sometimes been 'omitted' from history, which has to some degree been the case here; only through searching through records has Mackenzie's input now come to light. This is arguably illustrative of the prevalent systemic sexism of which we are a part [18]. Mackenzie asserted her influential support for Steiner's educative ideals, and wished to help him in his determined request for establishing Steiner education, externally to the then single existing school of its kind [16].

## **2.4 Welsh statutory education policies**

While Steiner principles of reverence are core to Steiner education, both Welsh and British legislation and values underlying statutory education policies also inform the management and operation of Steiner Schools in these countries. This is also in accordance with the first reason for DEM systems; the school in question is seen to consider legal duties and guidance carefully [30]. The Independent Schools Standards (Wales) Regulations (2003) lays out clear statutory obligations, and the Independent Schools Registration and Operation Guidance (2014) and the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice for Wales (2004) provide guidance which the School elects to follow. The ESTYN Inspectorate is the Welsh schools' inspecting body that scrutinises 'standards, wellbeing and attitudes to learning, teaching and learning experiences, care, support and guidance, and leadership and management' against the obligations of quality and standards of an independent Welsh school [19].

## **3. Principles of equality and diversity**

### **3.1 The principle of equality of opportunity**

The equality and diversity policy refers to the conceptually limited and older principle that is widely being superseded, that of equality of opportunity.

This principle rejects discrimination between applicants for jobs or for entrance to schools and universities, except on relevant grounds such as merit. The principle of equality of opportunity might be seen as exemplified in procedures such as the selective 11 plus examination system, which used to be regarded (and is still often regarded) as providing equal access to Grammar School education to all who undergo this test. This test was believed to offer equal opportunities to all applicants, regardless of gender, class or religion, but in fact at least one of its components, the IQ test, has turned out to favour candidates from middle-class families because it is to some degree a test of middle-class knowledge. In his *Theory of Justice* Rawls [1] talks about 'fair equality of opportunity', and may be interpreted as supporting theoretically egalitarian procedures of this kind. However, this principle was much earlier rejected by Michael Young [3] as liable to generate a radically divided society, which he called 'the meritocracy', a society divided between people whose advancement was due to their socially recognised 'merit' on the basis of employment of the Principle of Equality of Opportunity, and the rest of society, left with no basis to complain about their powerlessness.

UK employment law nevertheless requires recognition of this value in public organisations, allowing, for example, any applicant to apply for a post in a public authority. But, as we would argue, the successful applicant would often have a class advantage involving 'cultural capital'; they may have an advantaged understanding of the value of education, appropriate command of language, easier access to the education system, private funding opportunities, and/or established social networks [20]. In order to demonstrate compliance, organisations have, since the 1980s, adopted 'equal opportunity policies' (and many still have such policies), with, for example, the development of anti-discriminatory awareness and the appearance of morally approved values, current at that time.

'Equal opportunities' policies in public organisations have remained in place; this has shielded these organisations in law in terms of their demonstrating their prevention of unlawful discrimination. But arguably no more ambitious interpretation of 'equality' was generally propounded, introduced or achieved either in this legislation or in the resulting practices. Despite welcoming its rejection of overt discrimination, following Young [3] and Singer [2] we regard the Principle of Equality of Opportunity as inadequate, for the reasons given in this section, and also as failing to facilitate the kinds of equality favoured by Steiner and Mackenzie (see above).

### **3.2 The principle of equality of outcome**

In absolute contrast, the Principle of Equality of Outcome aims at a levelling up or down of any population to which it is applied, such that those affected end up with equal achievements. But this Principle pays insufficient account to differences of inheritance, environment, culture and need, and thus to diversity. (When it is claimed that principles of equality and diversity are liable to conflict, this is the kind of principle of equality that lends this claim credibility.) In the context of the Cardiff Steiner School, this Principle might, for example, involve the adoption of a goal that all higher aged pupils achieve the same end qualification; but this would not be a useful or meaningful principle to be applied within the School, and would in fact diminish the strength and value of the end qualification, for which there is no desire. It would also counter the need for differentiation within class teaching and learner understanding at all levels, and could instead mean students being given the solutions to problems, rather than letting them learn at their own pace. This principle is therefore inappropriate in this context as it does not allow for the value of individual achievement, and also could not be applied in practice.

### **3.3 The principle of equality of treatment**

A lesser-rated rung on the equality ladder according to Singer [2], but perhaps more applicable principle of equality here, is the Principle of Equality of Treatment. This Principle requires for example pupils to be treated equally, receiving, for example, the same teaching and the same provisions, despite their differences of ability, aptitude and need. (This is another principle of equality which conflicts with respect for diversity.) There have sometimes been salutary motivations for adherence to this principle, such as a wish to avoid deference to some people because of the status into which they have been born, and relative contempt for others because of their lowlier status. But differential treatment grounded in irrelevant differences can be avoided without all differences being ignored; and respect for all, far from implying becoming blind to differences, frequently involves taking differences into account, and responding accordingly. Steiner's advocacy of equal 'reverence' for all implies just such sensitivity to different abilities, aptitudes and needs, and thus a principle of respecting diversity of ability, aptitude and need, rather than one of equality of treatment.

The UK Government's Equality Act 2010 became law, with the introduction of 'protected characteristics', that is, nine types of social groups eligible for legal protection in practice. The School Policy accordingly includes these categories. There is no mention of the principle or practice of equality of treatment in this legislation or other related legal guidance, and maybe this is why numerous public organisations continue to use the language of 'equal opportunities', even though they now have to incorporate the protected characteristics in their operation in a proactive sense. It may be that there remains a limited conceptual understanding of affording disadvantaged groups particular attention in terms of prohibiting discriminatory conduct, and their being offered equal access accordingly.

### **3.4 The principle of equality of consideration**

Steiner's stance was later well articulated by the more recent philosopher, Peter Singer. As mentioned earlier, Singer [2] divided principles of equality into distinct and precise varieties. The principle that largely supersedes that of equality of opportunity, and also of equality of treatment, according to what may be regarded as a broader interpretation of fairness, is the Principle of Equality of Consideration. In philosophical terms, this principle involves 'giving equal weight in our moral deliberations to the like interests of those affected by our actions' ([2], p. 21). Since greater weight attaches to unsatisfied basic needs, such needs are prioritised over, for example, desires not corresponding to needs of this kind [21]. This principle, like the Principle of Equality of Opportunity, rejects discrimination on the basis of race, class or gender, but goes importantly beyond it in seeking to give equal consideration to those who, even if they theoretically enjoy equal opportunities, have very different needs, which are often unsatisfied. The Principle of Equality of Consideration well reflects the stances of Steiner and Mackenzie, embodies provision for respecting diversity, and incorporates the features that give their attractiveness to principles of equality, without preventing appropriate respect for otherness. This Principle overcomes the defects of the Principles of Equality of Opportunity, Treatment and Outcome, objections to which (as presented above) thus count as arguments in its favour. At the same time it captures the widespread intuitive endorsement of fairness, honoured across most if not all societies, without being tainted with arbitrary forms of discrimination such as those based on status, class, wealth, caste or gender. As such it should, we suggest, itself be endorsed.

Examples of the application of this principle include the establishment of the Paralympic Games. Games reflecting merely equality of opportunity would almost inevitably see disabled athletes unable to benefit from the theoretical ability to compete on an equal basis with able-bodied athletes [22]. But consideration of the needs of disabled athletes has led to Games in which people with disabilities can compete on an equal footing with others who have comparable disabilities. The institution of Paralympic Games has vindicated the stated values of the Games of 'Determination, Inspiration, Courage and Equality'; and the kind of equality in question can reasonably be interpreted as Equality of Consideration.

This example also bears out how proper provision can be made for diversity without adoption of relativism. To adopt a relativism of perspectives in a would-be attempt to uphold recognition of diversity would in fact simultaneously imply the lack of a basis for recognition of diversity from all other perspectives (i.e., other than those which distinctively honour relevant kinds of diversity), and thus the complete absence of any *universal* basis for respecting diversity. But the kind of respect for diversity displayed in the Paralympic Games is based on acceptance of the principle of equality of consideration, which itself implies respect for diversity, and can be regarded as a universalistic principle, acceptable both to the able-bodied and the disabled, and to majorities and minorities alike, irrespective of divergences of perspective.

### **3.5 Welsh government requirements and the principle of equality of consideration**

The Welsh Government may have intended the values of the Principle of Equality of Consideration in its advisory Special Educational Needs Code of Practice for Wales (2004). This arguably goes further than the Equality Act in addressing individuals and allowing them to perform according to a platform of policies to attain equal learning achievements based on students' own merit. This addresses four pre-identified pupil categories: 'More Able and Talented', 'Additional Learning Needs', 'English as an Additional Language', and 'Looked After Children'. Relatedly the School policy states '*The philosophical principle of equality of consideration is adopted by the School. This takes into account all people's types of need. People are encouraged and supported to fulfil the capacities and potential that they have*'. The Policy, in line with the School Access Plan, reminds the School of its obligation positively to consider the requirements of any child with a disability to access all areas of the School that children without a disability can access. This section of the Policy, required by the Independent Schools Registration and Operation Guidance (2014), allows independent schools the chance to gradually improve upon ease of access to physical entrances and the accessibility of the curriculum. The School has in fact attempted to counter an individualised model of disability, and rather, recognise disability as a socio-political issue, where the provider is responsible for implementing plans of modern designs for wide and easy access for all, such as building ramps for all access points [23]). The UK Equality Act's protection of the protected characteristics could be seen to be somewhat selective and exclusionary, in that there remain certain groups with social characteristics that are neither mentioned nor protected. This could be seen to allow such groups to be discriminated against (for example, larger people). Hence the Act may not fully take into account the Principle of Equality of Consideration, despite making considerable progress towards honouring it. Because of its encouragement of tolerance, and fostering of independently held positive values, the Policy goes further than the Equality Act in aiming to achieve equality of consideration, and in observing some groups who remain legally unprotected, where it states: '*In addition, the School will seek to*

*prevent prejudice and discrimination on the grounds of the socio-economic class, size and appearance of School members.* The aim is to ensure that no negative discrimination will be tolerated by anyone in the School in any capacity; this concern also reflects a parallel, if localised, aim to address and challenge the hierarchical, negative assumptions one may make, however inadvertently, when occupying a position of advantage.

A pertinent example is the socio-economic class position that people who attend a Steiner school normally have. The presence of working-class members is moderately unusual, partly because as an independent charitable organisation, the School remains inaccessible to many, despite the existence of School bursaries. If such working-class members have different apparent material values and general use of language, then they could be visibly conspicuous in their difference. For members of a Steiner community, who may assume equal valuation of and respect towards others, this could serve as a useful test, to challenge their implicit assumptions about what is 'admissible', and whether in fact they fall into a hierarchical trap of assuming a sense of superiority in some aspects of social life.

In terms of *'the School (seeking) to prevent prejudice and discrimination on the grounds of ... size and appearance of School members,'* another envisageable example within the community could be that of heterosexual couples where the woman is taller than the man. This situation challenges Westernised established stereotypes of the 'romantic ideal', where men are the physically, mentally and perhaps even intellectually strong 'masculine' partner, where they hold responsibility and ownership on behalf of women, that is, they follow the normative part of hegemonic masculinity [24]. Accordingly, women should, in contrasting parity be slim, pretty, emotional, vulnerable and 'feminine', and follow the normative role of subservient femininity.

These concepts can be seen to have justified centuries of division of labour between women and men, at least since Aristotle in ancient Athens onwards and more recently on the part of founder sociologist Harriet Martineau 1802–1876, for example, where she wrote about the 'political non-existence of women' [25], and educationalist and philosopher Millicent Mackenzie. Thomas [15] summarises Mackenzie's clear observation of institutional sexism justified by patriarchal society of the early 1900s. We may assume we have moved away from these antiquated notions, and yet the lingering norm is perhaps that males 'ought to be' taller or at least the same height as their female spouses in order to uphold 'normality'. Here we may be forced to reflect on our own prejudices that we apply to ourselves and others who surround us [26].

Another example of the importance of the equality of consideration is where people are respected as equally valid and 'normal' in a changing society, and recognised according to their own reality. As an example, Halberstam [27, 28] writes about the 'normal behaviour' of masculinity, and that rather than some lesbian women impersonating this, a trait of 'female maleness' is a valid and established identity. Cultural normative values behind the established understanding of fixed trait identities are perceived by some minority groups to be 'identity fictions', that is, at odds with user groups' own interpretations of fluctuating, and more complex, modernised identities. The School community is familiar with same gender parents; they are to an extent an understandable norm, and also have legal protection. This is possibly less judged as it is increasingly understood, as pioneers pave the way for establishing normalities.

### **3.6 The principle of equality of treatment and 'colour blindness'**

A further undesirable example in relation to the principle of equality of treatment could be found in the form of a 'colour-blind approach' where for example

black recipients used to be treated as if they were white recipients in normalising a community existence according to the white majority, and in treating people all the same. Ignoring racial difference may have prohibited directly racist conduct, but failed to recognise individual identities, or to value minority ethnic difference [29]. Richard et al. [7] argue that organisations implementing DEM practices should not make the mistake of ensuring that 'one size fits all'; organisations ought to differentiate between minority social characteristics, rather than assuming that having one type of minority representation allows an organisational claim of 'diversity'. The opposite to a 'colour-blind' approach is multiculturalism [30]: the proactive recognition and addressing of the diverse nature of society, together with an expectation of meaningful access and citizenship for all. This means that in this sense, one could propose that the opposite of equality of treatment here is the meaningful recognition and addressing of *diversity*, where rather than not being treated unfavourably, one receives positive recognition for being different. The Policy states ... *'Difference and diversity are valued .... Where a child has diverse 'protected characteristics', as well as aspects outside of the Equality Act, such as certain food requirements, these will be accepted, and children and students will be individually respected accordingly'*.

### 3.7 Diversity

A current interpretation of Diversity questions 'objectivised' established knowledge, and recognises that many assumptions are subjectively formed according to established and changing cultural values. An example of some of society's failure to recognise the subjectivity of societal 'facts' is that, before 1968, being gay in the UK was criminal, according to law. In 1968 when the DSM-II (the American classification of mental disorders) defined being gay as a mental illness, it *ceased* to be criminal behaviour in the West, and *became* a mental disorder for 19 years. Then in 1987, homosexuality was removed from the DSM-II, although in 1988 the Thatcher Conservative Government introduced Section 28 of the Local Government Act stating that a local authority 'shall not ... promote the teaching in any state school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship'. In direct response to this, also in 1988, Stonewall was established in the UK, a prominent gay rights campaigning body.

Significantly in 1988, while the UK was seen to have taken a step backwards, Denmark became the first country in the world to give legal recognition to same-gender partnerships. The UK eventually followed from 1997, first with same-gender partners being recognised in relation to immigration. These examples illustrate the extent of normative values changing according to prominent tolerances, and not necessarily progressively or supportively towards the minority in question. However in accordance with the UK Equality Act 2010, diversity is recognised and protected, and society has partially followed suit and in particular within the School community in question.

In parallel, in 2002, the UK Government recognised that 'transsexuality' was not a mental disorder, whereas prior to this it had been assumed to be. In the same way, issues such as those surrounding transgender people challenge society's thinking further. Hines [31] found that many general practitioners still believe that *being* transgender is to have mental ill-health. The protected characteristic 'gender reassignment' has brought this group of people into the mainstream, by the legalising of their protection; yet 'gender fluidity' is not a protected status. Lobby group and UK campaign charity 'Gendered Intelligence' established in 2008 went some way towards the societal understanding of the notion of gender diversity. Arguably however, we have to think very differently nowadays, if we are to accept that gender can fluctuate. Respecting difference meaningfully means not being unnerved when

we cannot tell if someone is female or male, or if we believe them to be a different gender from the one they are portraying, and that it no longer matters.

Accordingly the School encourages the use of ‘they’ and ‘them’ as gender neutral terms across written and verbal communication, and pupils are referred to as ‘child’, or ‘student’ upon entering class six [23]. And the Policy states ‘*The protected characteristic of ‘gender reassignment’ is understood and respected. This policy extends its protection and respect to members of the community with a fluctuating or fluid gender, where one’s gender identity shifts, and is not fixed*’. This is a pertinent example of a newly known minority group in the focus of public attention, that until recently may have been the topic of derision. Society may be slowly realising that this minority group has an equally valid and rational identity to others, and therefore one requiring acceptance and respect; the School community is no exception.

An ironic parallel example to the above is the fact that during Mackenzie’s working life, women were the ‘minority’ group, and similarly treated with derision when they attempted to become visible and hold positions within society. Mackenzie fought against the institutionalised status quo with her individual belief in egalitarianism and liberty for women. In being appointed to Cardiff University Senate following her professorship of 1904, it was here that Mackenzie could prompt the strongly contested, yet laboriously slow progressive opportunities of women students and colleagues. Mackenzie also established work projects for women and girls of the lower classes in the Cardiff University Settlement project, a programme managed UK wide (normally for men of the lower classes) by philanthropists with an aim to reduce the socio-economic divide between classes. But in 1908 Mackenzie co-established the Cardiff and Vale Suffragists; this action perhaps illustrates her disputing women’s discrimination and related prejudice the most clearly. She began with 70 members, and by 1914 she had 1200 members [32].

Mackenzie seems to have continued to defend values of respecting diversity as being central to a type of education that enabled individuals to become aware of and explore all parts of society: ‘The tyranny of ... fixed ideas and prejudices disturb the balance of life, and render impossible that state of freedom which can only result when a unified will animates the whole being’ ([17], p. 28). Mackenzie asserted that it was the role of education to challenge and enable a balanced perspective, and hence in the longer term to rid society of its discrimination and intolerance.

Mackenzie wrote of Steiner that his ideas on ‘freeing the pupil’ ([17], p. xi) were in accord with her own views of promoting a moral education. She stated ‘we are all more conscious of the demand for freedom as coming from the young, and more ready to consider the validity of this demand than ever before’ ([17], p. 24). Mackenzie wrote that the ultimate goal of ‘freedom’ for citizens is to be understood in spiritual terms, because this is where balance, consideration and creativity can be facilitated. This, as the crucial element for the basis of education, means that the young people of society will understand this intellectual and spiritual path, and become wiser than the current generation, “and those once started on the road that leads thitherward will not easily be induced to relinquish the quest” ([17], p. 27).

## **4. Steiner’s education and the Cardiff Steiner school**

### **4.1 Steiner’s education**

Steiner explained at the time of the first established school “that the characteristic feature of the (Waldorf-Astoria Cigarette Factory) School lies in its educational principles, based on the knowledge of man(*sic*). ... (which) are closely connected

with the most fundamental human impulses” ([33], p. 11). That is, the nature and the potential of humanity are taught to children, through person-centred, chronological, creative, and experiential methods of *head*, *heart* and *hands*; a foundational spiritual connection underlies this educative system. Steiner’s understanding of the spiritual core of humanity reflects the education offered, which in turn becomes the spiritual core of the school [34]. Experiential learning involves the slow and controlled introduction of risk, enabling children to learn from *doing*, and to further natural development. Steiner recognised the capacity of humankind, and therefore the requirement, to treat children with reverence. This can enable their subsequent full engagement with increasing joy and wonder at the world that surrounds them. “When ... the emotional and volitional aspects of human experience combine with thinking, children are able to form an inner connection with what they study” ([34], p. 125).

Values diverse from the norm are thereby present in this education. Through the presentation of authentic stories of global mythologies for example, and the teacher offering an implicit balance, children can find their own answers to the ambiguities of life. Reverence for children by the teacher is partly an instrument enabling individual understanding, as is reverence for teachers by the children. Reverence is also explicitly present, in the underlying respect afforded for all racial and cultural identities [34]. In discussing the globally multi-cultural curriculum, Masters [35] states that for example in the study of a spiritual geography, countries’ ethnic backgrounds are recognised and valued, and religious faiths of indigenous communities explored and respected. International Steiner teacher work visits reinforce this recognition of diversity, where the aims are to learn from international educational initiatives according to, for example, individual cultures’ portrayals of their own streams of history, thus avoiding ethnocentrism [35].

#### **4.2 The Cardiff Steiner school ethos**

The Cardiff Steiner School claim that their ethos, guided by Steiner, and in line with the values of Mackenzie, is of an informed, progressive, and inclusive urban school, working to a city timetable [23, 36]. In terms of being *informed*, staff and some of the wider community study academic theories and application of anthroposophy for their personal development, where teachers base their work on spiritual knowledge, and some study philosophy. While anthroposophy is not taught to children, Steiner explained how its aims are not just theoretical, but “that these (are) meant to enter social life quite directly and practically,” in the form of teachers understanding child development and in their approach to education ([33], p. 3). Also, the School recognises and celebrates its origins in the form of mothers wishing to start a Steiner kindergarten in one parent’s living room, 21 years ago, and from that, of women establishing a social business and managing the beginnings of a Steiner school; the community has grown in persistence and collaborative strength. The School could be seen as *progressive* where the Certificate of Steiner Education has been adopted and implemented in order to maintain meaningful Steiner education throughout children’s school life, and where young people can progress to university as independent, balanced and critical thinkers. Also, a collaborative management system invites decisions and decision making to be respected and welcomed, and trust is afforded amongst core mandating groups, thus avoiding any sense of difficulty or inadequacy.

The School claims to be *inclusive* in the implementation of its fees system. The School has one of the lowest fee levels in Steiner schools UK wide, and is significantly lower than other independent schools; they also fundraise for a bursary to enable accessibility. Parents are invited to talks on educative and child

developmental aspects, and there is a parent body that meets with the School Management Team. Parents report a feeling of a ‘palpable community’: a unique experience to those new to the School [23]. The School is an urban city school; it recognises its parent community and works according to their working timetable. The ethos could be seen to be founded on recognitions of equality and diversity in that both role models (Steiner and Mackenzie) believed in respect, the fulfilling of opportunities, additional care and support, and the recognition and promotion of groups and peoples. In terms of the third virtue of DEM practices as mentioned above, the school also appears to represent the diverse local and international community it serves through its own staff diversity, with gender and national diversity well represented [9, 33, 36].

### **4.3 Structure of the school**

The School asserts that its ethos informs its structure, in that its community has purposefully sought an informed, progressive and inclusive leadership and management system. This is based on modernising Steiner principles of egalitarianism. It is neither a hierarchy, which is the ladder system of State sector Steiner schools in England and indeed some other English Steiner independent schools, nor a collective, where there is equality-based, unanimous community-wide decision making, such as the Quakers (the Religious Society of Friends) have [37].

Neither is it the traditional model of a British Steiner school which has something similar to a collective consensus decision making through the College of Teachers, the central body made up of staff of a Steiner school. Steiner schools have gradually realised that while egalitarian minded, such systems have produced slow decision making, or indeed non-decisions. The Association of Waldorf Schools North America [38] has advocated a mandate structure for many years, where collaborative decision making is made by three constitutional mandating groups, of the Board of Trustees (voluntary overseeing governors), College of Teachers (staff body) and Administration (office managers). They logically delegate specific responsibilities to mandate groups made up of members of those three bodies [13]. An example of devolved decision making with accountability via the mandate structure is where College is responsible for pedagogical governance. That is, all governance level educational decision making is made by College; subsequently, College is accountable to Trustees, who are in turn accountable to the wider membership, according to British Company law.

In the Cardiff Steiner School, tying these three bodies together is the collaborative and devolved leadership body, the School Management Team. This is made up of two administrative managers, alongside three Educational Co-ordinators, for the three School faculties, Upper School, Lower School and Early Years. Educational Co-ordinators are not line managers; rather, staff working within faculties are expected to trust in and respect the advice of educational co-ordinators based on their experience and thorough knowledge of Steiner pedagogy, planning, monitoring systems and professional working. After some improvements, the system appears to generally work productively and positively, bearing trust and accountability in mind, with a clear division and clarity of roles; again principles of equality and diversity are held to be at the core of the mandate structure of School management, not least with respect to such egalitarian practices as delegation, co-operation and accountability [36].

### **4.4 Examples of daily educational work practices**

Steiner wrote: “Reverence awakens a power of sympathy in the soul through which we draw towards us qualities in the beings around us, qualities which would

otherwise remain concealed” ([14], p. 28). Daily educational work practices serve to exemplify the principles of equality and diversity, and we interpret these practices as fulfilling Steiner’s intended meaning of a 100 years ago. Four examples are here highlighted. Children of Steiner schools recite a Steiner saying as a daily morning verse. The Lower School verse is centred on developing their personalities and knowledge assisted by ‘humankind’, and growing through the welcome exchange of ideas and development of equanimity. Similarly, staff of Steiner schools also have a daily morning verse that they recite together, and this focusses on their recognition of the wonder of the world, and of their personal strength in relaying this to their learners through awe, fervour, patience, responsiveness, and commitment to facilitating child lived experience. Equality and diversity are at the heart of both of these customs, which have been recited daily by Steiner children and teachers, all around the world, for almost a 100 years.

A third example of a daily School practice instilled by values of diversity and equality of consideration is the application of additional learning support for some pupils. The Additional Learning Needs teacher (a recurrent presence) advises other teachers about particular differentiation, that is, a flexibility in wider teaching to endorse the reverence given to the child. The Steiner approach to children with an additional learning need is that the label does not determine who the child is. Rather, the approach is person-centred and recognises diversity; there is an expectation that any child can progress and learn, and can develop their humanity [33]. A fourth daily practice embodying equality of consideration is the interpretation and application of competition in the curriculum. Competitive games promote combined endeavour, as opposed to individual ego. The joy is in the game, where both sides become energised to exceed their own skills, and where all participants’ efforts are individually acknowledged by the other players [34]. These practices play a central role in the management of Steiner schools, including the Cardiff Steiner School [36].

Another practice exemplifies how education for sustainability is delivered in the School. Children are taken daily on visits to nearby countryside, for there is no substitute for experience of the natural world as a key to learning to cherish it sustainably, and to preserve rather than subvert its cycles. Relatedly, the School seeks to embody sustainable approaches in its management practices [39].

#### **4.5 The school qualification**

Steiner education is different from the UK educational system, and is also different from the majority of British schools. The School has adopted a unique external formal assessment system at Further Education level, enabling students to access Higher Education, and so University. Cardiff became the fourth Steiner School in the UK to adopt the New Zealand Certificate of Steiner Education, NZCSE, with other British and German Steiner schools following suit, and is the single school in Wales offering this educative system. According to the ‘Lisbon Recognition Convention’ international Further Education qualifications are recognised by Universities where countries are members of this agreement. The UK is one of these, as are 56 other member and non-member countries of the Council of Europe, including New Zealand [40].

In contrast with Principles such as Equality of Outcome, the final School qualification is given deep consideration and moderated at three separate stages, allowing pupils to achieve their formally measured units differentially, and not always passing a required minimum level. The upper school system works according to the application of pre-university levels of level one, two and three, and for an occasional project at level four (for an advanced piece of work that is equivalent to a first-year university module). The educative core is based on the continuation of purely Steiner

education where pupils learn about the development of human kind, in an experiential way that allows for a wide consciousness of interlocking subjects, rather than narrowly defined and disconnected learning areas which may be passively absorbed.

The Steiner education aim is to shape young adults into developing an independent mind, an ability to debate and to consider others' positions through non-judgmental exploration, a strong sense of community, a physical sense of movement and their own being, a deep sense of creativity, a broad and in-depth general knowledge, as well as an advanced understanding of their 'extension subjects', that is, subjects they specialise in at the upper end of their education. Pupils are given the chance to achieve their targets allowing for categories of disadvantage that could apply to them [41], yet are still dependent on their own individual commitment, scholarship and hard work. This system again follows the principle of equal consideration; a student whose attendance is extremely poor may not achieve the certificate, irrespective of their work level. Conversely, students could still achieve a level of excellence at each level, without passing all learning outcomes, where certain types of testing prove too problematic. The assessment criteria test individual pupils in an all-round way, which allows individuals to excel in some testing environments rather than others, such as in essays, reports, presentations, debates, film making, performance, illustrations and projects (not an exhaustive list) [42].

The Cardiff Steiner School maintains that the management of the Certificate is equality- and diversity-based, and involves multiple layers of delegation, cooperation and accountability, and Steiner educational values. The Upper School Educational Coordinator manages the teaching programme, and moderates upper school teachers' learning outcomes and assessments of work. An internal moderator checks samples of work further. Random samples of work are then continuously sent to the New Zealand accreditation body SEDT for further layers of accountability, with respect to student work quality and standardisation of assessment [36, 42].

## **5. Conclusions**

### **5.1 Conclusion**

The purpose of Steiner education is to inform and nurture children and young people to give them 'love for the world and for (their) fellows ... (to develop) gentleness and quiet inner patience, (and to aim) for selfless co-operation' ([14], p. 212). Children's development is understood to be centred around their 'head, heart and hands'; their intellectual capacity is directed by their powers of empathy, patience and consideration, and these in turn are influenced by their physical awareness (not least of the natural world around them) and their ability to express themselves creatively. This leads them to reflective clarity and knowledge, ready to enter the world as young adults.

The Cardiff Steiner School strives to follow DEM systems, arguably in a principled rather than superficial way; the DEM tenets (as advocated in the recent literature of sustainable management practices) of legal compliance, symbolic value and organisational productivity (in this case the tenet of ensuring the School's viability) are visibly followed, but strict adherence to this management theory may occasionally fall short of the basis of humanity on which Steiner's philosophy was founded [9, 33]. Steiner's principle of reverence for everyone including children (a principle endorsed also by Mackenzie) has been shown to embody the Principle of Equality of Consideration, and equally that of Respect for Diversity; and these principles have been shown to be embedded and embodied in the operation and educational management of the Cardiff Steiner School in multiple contexts. Our case study and in particular the examples we have presented illustrate how these principles, which

currently enjoy legislative support, at least in Wales, are realised and implemented throughout the School, both in its teaching and in its management processes.

We have used management theory as a basis from which to assess the philosophical notions of equality and diversity, and investigate the purpose these can have in a modern school. We have sought to inform an audience with interests in management and sustainability about Steiner's (and Mackenzie's) educational philosophies, illustrated by the modern sustainable management practice of the Cardiff Steiner School. As we have shown, there is an underlying pervasive message of equality and respect for diversity deriving from the founding values of both Mackenzie and Steiner, which have in some ways been adapted into modern terms, but in another sense are timeless and remain as originally expressed. The modern Steiner community upholds these in modern Wales, in line with the requirements of Welsh Government legislation, and contemporary interpretations of both equality and diversity. The philosophical principle of equality of consideration, which we have shown to be far superior to rival principles of equality, informs the practice of this School on a sustainable basis, in an ongoing pursuit of both diversity and equality.

## 5.2 Limitations of this research

It lay outside the scope of our research to establish that successful educational outcomes are invariably generated within the Cardiff Steiner School, let alone in other Steiner schools. For example, while our interviews point in this direction, they were indicative rather than conclusive. There again, a longitudinal study of the careers of Cardiff Steiner School ex-students would be needed before such success could be demonstrated beyond doubt, and other Steiner schools would need to be subjected to parallel studies. Further, with respect to the dimension of sustainability, the sustainability of individual Steiner schools requires a worldwide system of such schools and its attainment of a critical mass sufficient to withstand localised problems and upheavals; and while this requirement may be well on the way to being achieved, another paper would be required to investigate how close it is to complete fruition. Nonetheless significant progress has been made in the space available in showing how the pursuit of equality and diversity enhance the sustainable management of at least one Steiner School.

### Author details

Robin Attfield<sup>1\*</sup> and Kate Attfield<sup>2</sup>

1 Cardiff University, Cardiff, United Kingdom

2 Cardiff Metropolitan University, Cardiff, United Kingdom

\*Address all correspondence to: [attfieldr@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:attfieldr@cardiff.ac.uk)

### IntechOpen

© 2019 The Author(s). Licensee IntechOpen. This chapter is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited. 

## References

- [1] Rawls J. *Theory of Justice*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; 1971
- [2] Singer P. *Practical Ethics*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 1993
- [3] Young M. *The Rise of the Meritocracy*. London: Thames and Hudson; 1958
- [4] Bryman A. *Social Research Methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; 2004
- [5] Attfield K. Qualitative individual interviews with Deaf people. In: Delamont S, Atkinson P, Hardy M, Williams M, editors. *Social Science Research Methods Foundations*. New York: Sage; 2019
- [6] Innes M. Exemplar: Investigating the investigators—Studying detective work. In: Gilbert N, editor. *Researching Social Life*. London: Sage; 2001. pp. 211-223
- [7] Orlando R, Roh H, Pieper J. The link between diversity and equality management practice bundles and racial diversity in the management ranks: Does firm size matter? *Human Resource Management*. 2013;52(2)
- [8] Konrad A, Yang Y, Maurer C. Antecedents and outcome of diversity and equality management systems: An integrated institutional agency and strategic human resources management approach. *Human Resource Management*. 2016;55(1):83-107
- [9] Ali M, Konrad A. Antecedents and consequences of diversity and equality management systems: The importance of gender diversity in the TMT and lower to middle management. *European Management Journal*. 2017;35:440-453
- [10] Lombardo E, Meier P. Gender mainstreaming in the EU: Incorporating a feminist reading? *European Journal of Women's Studies*. 2006;13(2):151-166
- [11] De Boise S. Gender inequalities and higher music education: Comparing the UK and Sweden. *British Journal of Music Education*. 2018
- [12] Briault S. Rudolf Steiner's threefold image of a healthy society. In: Large M, Briault S, editors. *Free, equal and Mutual: Rebalancing Society for the Common Good*. Gloucestershire: Hawthorn Press; 2018. pp. 23-33
- [13] AWSNA. 2018. Available from: [https://waldorfeducation.org/waldorf\\_education/awsna\\_principles](https://waldorfeducation.org/waldorf_education/awsna_principles) [Accessed: April, 2019]
- [14] Steiner R. *Knowledge of Higher Worlds: How Is It To Be Achieved?* London: Rudolf Steiner Press [1919]; 2007
- [15] Thomas JB. Mistresses of method: Women academics in the day training college 1890-1914. *Journal of Educational Administration and History*. 1997;29(2):93-107
- [16] Paul J. Stratford-on-Avon: In the footsteps of Rudolf Steiner. *Journal of Biodynamics Tasmania Issue*. 2013;111:12-18
- [17] Mackenzie HM. *Freedom in Education*. London: Hodder & Stoughton Ltd.; 1924
- [18] Smith D. *The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology*. 4th ed. Toronto: Toronto University Press; 1998
- [19] ESTYN. 2018. Available from: <https://www.estyn.gov.wales/inspection/inspection-explained> [Accessed: April, 2019]
- [20] Bourdieu P. Cultural reproduction and social reproduction. In: Brown R,

- editor. Knowledge, Education and Social Change. London: Taylor & Francis; 1974. pp. 71-84
- [21] Attfield R. Ethics: An Overview. London: Bloomsbury; 2012
- [22] Macdonald S, Deacon L. Disability theory and social work practice. In: The Routledge Handbook of Social Work Theory. London: Routledge; 2019
- [23] Personal Communication with School Management Team staff at the Cardiff Steiner School. 2018
- [24] Hearn J. The sociological significance of domestic abuse. *Current Sociology*. 2013;**61**(1):152-170
- [25] Martineau H. Society in America. New York: Routledge [1837]; 2017
- [26] Hill Collins P. Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment. 10th ed. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge; 2014
- [27] Halberstam J. The making of female masculinity. In Price J, Shildrick M, editors. *Feminist Theory and the Body*. New York: Routledge; 1999. pp. 125-133
- [28] Halberstam J et al. *Female Masculinity*. Durham, United States: Duke University Press; 2018
- [29] Lall M, Gillborn D. Beyond a Colour Blind Approach: Addressing Black & Minority Ethnic Inclusion in the Education Strand of New Deal for Communities. Sheffield: Sheffield Hallam University Press; 2004
- [30] Harris A, Han A. Malaysia? Young people and everyday multiculturalism in multiracialized Malaysia. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. Special Issue. 2019
- [31] Hines S. Recognising diversity? The gender recognition act and transgender citizenship. In: Hines S, Sanger T, editors. *Transgender Identities: Towards a Social Analysis of Gender Diversity*. Routledge: Abingdon; 2010. pp. 87-105
- [32] Jenkins B. Queen of the Bristol Channel Ports: The intersection of gender and civic identity in Cardiff, c. 1880-1914. *Women's History Review*. 2014;**23**(6):903-921
- [33] Steiner R. *Soul Economy and Waldorf Education*. Spring Valley, New York: Anthroposophic Press [1921]; 1986
- [34] Petrash J. *Understanding Waldorf Education: Teaching from the Inside Out*. Edinburgh: Floris Books; 2002
- [35] Masters B. *Steiner Education and Social Issues*. East Sussex: Sophia Books; 2007
- [36] Personal Communication with School Management Team Staff. 2019
- [37] Britain Yearly Meeting. 2016. Available from: <https://qandb.org/resources/members-articles/395-the-friends-decision-making-process-a-hidden-gem> [Accessed: April, 2019]
- [38] Association of Waldorf Schools North America (SWSF). 2018. Available from: <https://www.steinerwaldorf.org/> [Accessed: April, 2019]
- [39] Attfield R. Sustainability and management. *Philosophy of Management*. 2015;**14**:85-93
- [40] Council of Europe. 2018. Available from: [https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/highereducation/Recognition/LRC\\_en.asp](https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/highereducation/Recognition/LRC_en.asp) [Accessed: April, 2019]
- [41] Barton L. *Disability and Society: Emerging Issues and Insights*. London: Routledge; 2018
- [42] Steiner Education Development Trust. 2019. Available from: <https://sedt.co.nz/> [Accessed: April, 2019]