Schools of pseudoscience pose a serious threat to education

A lot of public concern has been expressed over the potential establishment of creationist free schools. This concern resulted in the government changing the rules for free schools to prevent them from teaching pseudoscience ("Richard Dawkins celebrates a victory over creationists", 15 January).

However, not enough attention has been paid to two equally grave threats to science education, namely Maharishi and Steiner schools. Maharishi schools follow the educational methods of the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, guru of the transcendental meditation movement, while Steiner education is based on an esoteric/occultist movement called anthroposophy, founded by Austrian mystic Rudolf Steiner ("Holistic unit will 'tarnish' Aberdeen University reputation", 29 April). The Maharishi school has as its specialist subject the "science of creative intelligence", which is not based on science. It also teaches a system of herbal medicine, most of which lacks evidence of efficacy and safety. Anthroposophy is centred on beliefs in karma, reincarnation and advancing children's connection to the spirit world.

The first Steiner academy opened in 2008, with a free school to open this September. The first Maharishi school opened last September. Both groups have interviews to open more schools in 2013. We believe that the new rules on teaching pseudoscience mean that no more of these schools should open.

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