

Risdene Academy

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School Business Manager: Mrs S. Bell

Principal: Miss Kerry Mills BA HONS PGCE
Vice Principal: Mrs C. Denton B.Ed HONS

09 January 2017

On Wednesday the 16th November the school was visited by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors who carried out a Section 8 inspection to see how far the school had progressed since their previous HMI visit and since the School's Ofsted in June 2015.

There were only 2 outcomes possible from our Section 8 Inspection: Effective action has been taken to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection to become a good school or that there has not been effective action taken.

The full version of the letter is available on the school's website, but should you wish to have a paper copy these can be obtained from the school office.

On this occasion the HMI inspector believed that effective action had not been taken to become a good school since the last visit and inspection and she was recommending an early inspection. The last HMI visit was in April 2016 and whilst she recognised at the time that the school had taken some steps to improve, a month later the children sat their end of Key Stage Tests. Sadly, the KS1 and KS2 results at the end of 2016 were significantly below our high expectations in both attainment and progress and below National expectations, which demonstrated improvements had not been sufficient.

The overall outcome, as you can imagine, is deeply disappointing and does not reflect the progress made by the school since my arrival and the impact we have had in the brief time. HMI recognised and praised the considerable work and impact that I, and the staff, have had during the first term. She agreed with all strengths, areas for developments and actions we were undertaking.

However, her decision that the school was not taking effective action was significantly influenced by the results from the last academic year. Alongside this, the previous leadership team were unable to recruit a full complement of permanent staff. Subsequently, the number of supply staff in the school, upon my arrival, was higher than we would have liked. The school has also been impacted by the long-term sickness of a member of the leadership team. This is at a time when the school is driving to improve and capacity needs to be at its greatest, to continue to halt the decline in standards over recent years and improve the progress and outcomes of the pupils.

The report also states that the quality of governance needs to improve. She explains that the governors have not always afforded accurate oversight to challenge and make rapid school improvement progress. However, since the summer I have worked closely with our AAB Chair, Mrs Christine Goodwin, to review the structure of meetings and information shared to ensure they are able to challenge me on the progress and outcomes of the school. This work has continued to develop and the AAB now have a clear oversight of the school's strengths, areas for improvement and actions. Meetings are focused entirely around challenge to ensure rapid school improvement. Prior to the visit, I was receiving support, from the Educational Support Team, within The Education Fellowship. The Education Fellowship continues to challenge and support the school and myself. The Education Fellowship have a newly appointed Education Executive who is working to offer wider support and challenge to ensure there is sustainable leadership capacity to ensure the very best outcomes for all pupils.

*Going beyond the expected with **PRIDE***

Positivity Respect Integrity Determination Excellence

To support the school in moving forward, whilst we recruit a permanent Vice Principal, there will be a member of the Education Fellowship Educational Support Team, working at Risdene 5 days a week. Liz Abel, will be fulfilling many of the Vice Principal's duties and she will be working under my direction to ensure we build sustainable leadership capacity from within the school.

Nothing which the HMI discussed or said was a shock. The Education Fellowship is clear where we are on our journey to be an outstanding school and I receive their full confidence and support. All of these areas have been identified and as a school, we are continually working to address them through our school improvement planning and changes that we are making.

The judgement we received reflects the "raising of the bar" and I welcome this as a part of the overall drive to improve standards of education for all children, locally and nationally. Since my arrival I have been working with staff, the AAB, children and families to raise their aspirations of achievement and I will continue to do this in order to:

Ensure every child are given opportunities to DREAM of a bright future, BELIEVE in themselves, and ACHIEVE their highest potential in school and throughout their life so that they can truly make a difference wherever they go.

Personally, I would like to thank you for the welcome and support I have received from you and the children since my arrival. Every effort and every decision that we take as a school, which may not always be popular, is to ensure that we work to ensure no child is failed by Risdene Academy. I came in to education to ensure all children are given the same opportunities to achieve and fulfil their full potential. The children of today are tomorrow's future and we will strive to ensure the best outcomes for them.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "K Mills". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Miss Kerry Mills