

Dear Parents,

You may be aware that Ofsted Inspectors visited RSSKL on Wednesday 2nd November. This came 8 school weeks after the last progress monitoring inspection which was carried out by Schools Inspection Service between 29th and 30th June. At that time the school was found to be meeting the relevant independent school standards. However, a number of recommendations were made for the school to implement.

The Judgement

In June, the Department for Education informed us that there would be a further progress monitoring inspection to ensure that the measures agreed had been implemented fully and were having the desired effect.

Although some progress has been made since June, the school was, in the most recent inspection on November 2nd, judged to be failing to meet standards in a number of areas.

What have we not done well enough?

The inspection regime for Part 3 of the Independent Schools Standards (welfare, health and safety of pupils) is, quite rightly, very stringent. In practice this means that a school will be failed on a single error. As a consequence of this, Part 8 (quality of leadership and management in schools) is also judged to be failing.

This is a very disappointing inspection report. As a school community we must accept the judgements made by the Ofsted inspectors who are trained to perform their duties in accordance with current legislation and within the remit given to them by the Department for Education.

What are we working to improve?

The school year began with serious staffing problems that we have worked hard to resolve.

I am also well aware that, in recent years, a number of issues have caused division and unrest within the school community. However, since the establishment of the School Management Team (SMT) both parents and teachers have expressed that they feel that the school is being properly managed now and that they are more comfortable in knowing who to speak to if they have questions or concerns. There has also been an improvement in staff morale. These successes are profoundly important since we are working towards developments and improvements at RSSKL which are not merely imposed by authority but arise out of a shared vision which can be achieved only through a collaborative approach. Parents, teachers, administrative staff, pupils, trustees, former parents and alumni all have a part to play in this process.

What are our strengths?

As a relative newcomer to the school, I am impressed by the quality of relationships between teachers and pupils. Having been present in various meetings (SMT, College, Staff Training and Trustee) I also know that the welfare, health and safety of pupils is the number one priority of all the staff and trustees. Place these two observations alongside the judgement made by Schools Inspection Service which visited the school in April 2015:

“Rudolf Steiner School Kings Langley provides a good quality of education. Provision in the Kindergartens is outstanding. Across the school pupils are able to become confident and articulate young people who have been well-prepared for the next stage in their lives and education. Their spiritual and moral development is outstanding, and their social and cultural development is good. The curriculum and other activities meet the needs of the pupils satisfactorily and the curriculum is well rounded throughout the school. Teaching and assessment is good overall with a significant proportion of teaching being outstanding. Pupils make good progress in their learning and the oldest ones achieve well in national examinations.”

What changes are being made as a result of this?

I'm sure you will agree with me that RSSKL offers a high standard of education and provides a safe environment for your children.

Having said all this, the fact remains that RSSKL still has work to do to ensure that its good work as well as its lines of accountability are properly evidenced. Trustees have confidence in the SMT but recognise that they have been overloaded. Therefore, we have decided to appoint someone with appropriate experience and expertise in regulatory frameworks and the delivery of school improvement. The successful candidate will work in partnership with SMT members and in an advisory capacity. During the period of this temporary position the appointee will also train the SMT and other staff so that RSSKL can develop the skills to handle these processes internally and ensure that they have as much connection to Steiner Waldorf Education and to the ethos of RSSKL as possible.

In addition to this SMT have also –

- Written a comprehensive action plan to improve areas in response to the inspection findings
- Commissioned a safeguarding audit that was carried out by ‘Herts for Learning’ and findings/suggestions for improvements have already been completed
- We have completed a complete review of our child protection files and processes
- Reviewed and improved record keeping relating to student signing out book, logs and student files
- Booked appropriate training to improve staff development
- Increased time allocated and improved documentation of SMT’s monitoring and evaluating schedule
- Drafted a School Improvement Plan which will be shared with staff for consultation this term and then the whole school community in the new year
- Started a process of policy review for the documents flagged in the inspection report

If you need to know more

Thank you for reading this letter. If you have further questions and would like to discuss these with SMT and Trustees please come along to a Whole School Meeting which will be held in the new year.

Kind regards,

Richard Moore
Chair of Trustees RSSKL