

Statement from the Certified Inspector for Rygaards School, Bernstorffsvej 54, 2900 Hellerup

School Code 157018

Report for Rygaards School concerning the school year 2017/18 from the Certified Inspector for schools with Danish and English as teaching languages, Principal emeritus, Klaus Eusebius Jakobsen.

*Overall conclusion:*

*As Inspector, I will evaluate whether Rygaards School compares with the instruction in the Danish State School, and supplement with an evaluation of whether the English department also does the same. It is my evaluation that Rygaards School compares at the highest level to the Danish State School.*

#### **About the school.**

Rygaards School, which is a Catholic school, has a Danish department (0 to 9<sup>th</sup> grade) where the teaching language is Danish, and an International department which starts with a Reception Class (from 4 years old) to 11<sup>th</sup> grade (15-16 years old). Here, the language is English.

On 17<sup>th</sup> January 1999, the Department of Education granted the school an exemption from the requirement of using Danish as the teaching language.

The Danish State School's curriculum provides the background for teaching in the Danish Department, with the exception of the subject religion, where the school has its own subject aims and final goals, while the English department follows the English National Curriculum leading to the Cambridge based exam IGCSE (International General Certificate of Secondary Education).

Therefore, the teaching and communication at Rygaards School is in both Danish and English.

#### **My visit.**

I made my inspection visit (a school day) on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2017 and visited classes in both the English and Danish departments.

I visited a 1<sup>st</sup> grade, where the topic of the day was 'brain gymnastics', a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, where Math was being taught and a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade where the subject was English, as well as Math in 4<sup>th</sup> grade and Danish in 7<sup>th</sup> grade.

In the English department, I attended art in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, History in 10<sup>th</sup> grade and Danish in 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

Apart from that, I had a meeting with the school's management team. This consists of Irene Harboe, deputy head and responsible for 4<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> grade, Gitte Juul Møller, (SFO and 0-3<sup>rd</sup> grade), Shirley Jacobsen, Head of Primary School, Melanie Millington, Head of Secondary School, as well as the Principal Charles Dalton.

My focus on this year's visit was to, among other things, observe and evaluate how the school, in daily practice and also in general, lives up to the requirements of the concept "Democratic education", that are described in

Friskolelovens § 1, no. 2.2, where it states that “ The school must, according to their goals and in all activities, prepare the students to live in a society similar to the Danish society, with freedom and democracy, as well as develop and strengthen the students’ democratic education and their understanding of and respect for basic freedom and human rights, including gender equality”.

Apart from thoroughly examining the methods used to work with this theme in the school’s visions and goals (this was given to me by the Secondary School’s new Head, Melanie Millington), I also sought to get an impression of how visible it was in the daily teaching, and observe this during my visit to the school. Not surprisingly, I found the most visible signs in the subjects Danish and History, where the importance of this very clearly appeared in the topic subject, but perhaps especially in the chosen methodology.

Conversations with students gave me a clear indication that the school not only taught this theme, but also through its action, indirectly held on to this aspect on a quite ordinary day, as was the day of my visit.

There is, naturally, a Student Council at the school. In the Student Council meetings, a couple of teachers participate, partly to ensure that democratic principles are observed and learnt, but also to be able to pass on student comments and wishes. There are notice boards around the school with results, agendas and conclusions.

In the International department, the 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grades have a weekly debate hour with their class teacher – similarly, there are meetings several times a week in the Danish department and in the Primary School.

I could feel the Democratic spirit in all the classes I met: an understanding that everyone should - in an orderly manner – have the chance to speak, seen in the light of a natural respect and understanding of the guiding role of the teacher. This fact applied to both the Danish and the International departments.

Therefore, I can, without any problem conclude that the Democratic goals are absolutely fulfilled at Rygaards School.

I would, however, recommend that it is explained a little more clearly about that part of the School’s life on the school website, because it is a real part of the daily life.

Another aim I had on this year’s inspection was to examine whether the concept “movement” was included naturally in teaching.

Of course, you do not see movement in all subjects and in all classes, but in the random section of lessons with which I was presented, movement was incorporated in 3 of the lessons, which I found quite good.

The most interesting was a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade tables-gymnastics. The class ‘performed’ and sang the tables from 1-10 with dance, arm stretching etc. to everyone’s great amusement.

In the English department’s History lesson in 10<sup>th</sup> grade, movement was primarily focused on source criticism – however strange it may sound. But the class was divided into groups that should evaluate sources (documents, letters, posters etc.) to be able to evaluate a special part of the battle of Verdun in World War 1. There was maximum interest in this exciting project and therefore a lot of movement in the lesson, intentionally or unintentionally planned.

An excellent example of involving and relevant teaching – praise to both students and teachers.

The visits in the remaining classes gave examples of the methods of different subjects. I found quality and focus in all classes, despite the fact that it was the day before the autumn break (the day before 'exercise day'). The students were very motivated - and where there was group work, there were no problems attaining academic results. May I add that there is a high degree of politeness, friendliness and curiosity in the students' behavior towards a stranger (me) in the class.

In all the classes, I found very engaged teachers who clearly set a framework for the work in the class and carried out the teaching at a professional and high level, and clearly ensuring space in the class for both genders.

There are different routines and traditions from department to department, among other things, in connection with morning assembly. For example, there is a daily assembly in the Danish department's 0 – 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, where they sing songs and psalms and say the Lord's Prayer.

On Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays the Danish department gathers for assembly in the church that is affiliated to the school and every Wednesday, the International department has a service of about 45 minutes.

I also had the chance to visit the Reception Class, and I had individual conversations with students and teachers as well as a meeting with the school's leadership.

There are 1018 students in total – almost the same as last year. In the International department there are 541 students, and in the Danish department there are 484 students. There are 105 employees in all.

In this connection, I found no difference between the Danish and the International department.

Curiosity is a positive quality – I noticed it greatly in the youngest students regarding my presence, and what I actually was doing in their class.

On the school's website, I established that Rygaards School attained yet again very good exam results in the end of the year exams, both the Danish and the International Departments, which did not surprise me.

**Conclusion:**

Rygaards School is a well-functioning and engaging school, where the teaching in both the Danish and the English Departments and the entire school life can, without problems, compare with teaching in the Danish Folkeskole.

17<sup>th</sup> October 2017

Klaus Eusebius Jakobsen

Charles Dalton has informed me that the school has not received any donations from the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2017 to the 12<sup>th</sup> of October 2017.