



# Rygaards International School

## Self-Evaluation 2015

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# Review of Use of National Curriculum Levels

## Background

Since 2014, there has been no requirement in the UK for teachers to use the National Curriculum levels when assessing pupils work from Years Reception to Year 9. Schools are therefore free to choose their own assessment system. Levels have become too abstract and too broad and parents do not understand them. Awarding National Curriculum levels is a summative measure of a pupils' progress.

## Successes

In January 2015, BBC attended training in London on training entitled, "Life after Levels". He fed back to staff that most UK schools would be continuing for the present time with NC levels as many did not have an alternative. However, in Primary School NC levels had been used only for Writing Assessments as INCAS testing gives an accurate measure of a child's ability and progress related to their age.

In the Secondary School, the use of MidYIS data for Year 7 to 9 has become embedded. Student progress can be ascertained on a year by year basis. So there is built in progression from INCAS to MidYIS.

It was decided in April, 2015, to continue with NC levels in Secondary until further notice. This was because it became clear that many International Schools were also "on the fence" about how to proceed. Furthermore, parents are now used to National Curriculum levels in Secondary and changing them would necessitate a fundamental rethink of our reporting system. In the Primary School. NC levels have continued to be used for termly Writing Assessments.

## Action steps

- Teams need to discuss feedback from training held in the UK in January, 2016. (BBC and LRO)
- Focus on Formative Assessment and feedback to Students. (Action Plan 2016)
- Ensure all staff are aware of level descriptors.
- Students need to be aware of their own level but not to treat it as a fixed ability indicator.(Secondary).

## Conclusions

Although NC levels are no longer supported by the DPE in the UK, they still provide a useful measure of a child's performance relative to the UK school population.

There has been no satisfactory solution provided by the Dfe in UK. Therefore, at Rygaards, we will continue to use Levels alongside other Summative forms of assessment, whilst focusing in 2016 on Formative Assessment and Feedback to students/Student Self Evaluation.

Secondary staff are considering the merits of an A to E assessment scale but this is in its infancy.

## Audit of Transition from Primary to Secondary

### Successes

During the Summer Term 2015, Year 6 students visited the secondary school and were taught by the Year 7 teachers. NFO gave a talk to the students. An information evening was held for Year 6 parents led by NFO.

Year 7s parents along with the parents of other year groups, were given a talk by both Heads in August which preceded the Class teacher Meetings. 6 well-attended meetings were held. These served to manage parental expectations and led to a noticeable improvement in positive communication between the school and parent body.

Shared INSET training: e.g. Assumption Education in August 2015

A meeting was held in October 2015 between the secondary staff and Year 6 teachers to discuss best practice. It was agreed to start the process earlier.

It was agreed that students needed to choose their Year 7 language options (French/German) earlier in the academic year.

A separate Key Stage co-ordinator has been appointed for KS3 (MOE).

### **Needs further development**

Need to continue joint training and Team Meetings e.g. child protection (January 2016) and Visible Learning (February 2016) to align good practice.

Class Teachers in Year 7 still need to disseminate more information about each child's academic progress to subject teachers.

### **Action steps**

- Information by MFL teachers to Year 6 students brought forward to February 2016
- UK course on Transition discussed and being considered for 2017
- Parent information meeting scheduled for Year 6 parents on 12<sup>th</sup> April

### **Conclusions**

This area is working well and the Year 6 students enjoyed their taster day in 2015. The current Year 7s found their way around much easier in 2015 compared with the first days of August 2014. The Year 7 teachers had a better understanding of the dynamics of the upcoming cohort. However, more work needs to be done on transferring knowledge about children's prior attainment. Limited evidence that INCAS data is actively used or compared with MidYIS data. Having said this, staff are quick to identify pastoral or academic concerns and these appear to be handled much more promptly than in the past.

## **Audit of Extra Curricular Provision at Rygaards School**

### **Present Situation**

A task force comprising both Heads of School and Key Stage Co-ordinators (NFO, SJA, BBC, EWI, SCR) was set up to review current extra-curricular provision and to recommend a plan of action. It was decided to establish a Duke of Edinburgh Programme in January 2015. This is required training of RPA and SCR (5 days, Cyprus) to become Duke of Edinburgh Award Leaders. They completed the training successfully and the School was awarded a Full Licence to operate as an Award Centre in April 2015.

The first students cohort comprised 26 students (mixed group of Year 9/10 boys and girls) and by the end of 2015, most had completed a programme of weekly meetings which included campcraft, navigation and orienteering. An audit by RPA of the students' logbooks indicated that all are on track to complete the Bronze Award by Summer 2016. Because of the large student interest, the school has decided to recruit more trainers (2 teachers: EWI, EBR) who will undergo training in London in February 2016.

At senior leadership level, the possibility of a Rygaards Award for all students has been discussed. This would be a system of awarding points for students' existing participation in SFO/Fritids/extra-curricular activities e.g. choir. NFO has seen BBC to brief him about the framework for the school-based Award. BBC will hold meetings with teaching staff in 2016.

A number of teaching staff have come forward with ideas for extra-curricular activities in school. These are now up and running and include yoga (LBA), Model United Nations (PEL), Debate (MOE). We are also actively participating in DISN events e.g. Athletics and winning medals! We regularly enter the COBIS Poetry competition but are expanding our involvement to include the Young Scientist Film Making Competition, and contributing articles to World Student Magazine (2 articles published to date by January 2016).

The SFO opened up morning sessions, which allowed parents to drop off children before the start of the school day.

### **Needs further development**

We still need to start up the Rygaards Award by presenting it to teaching staff and eliciting feedback from them. We are also looking at expanding our extra-curricular offer by forging links with other DISN schools e.g. Cricket (JGR and JLI have had training with the Danish cricket association along with sports teachers from NGG). A DISN cricket tournament will be held in the Summer of 2016.

When recruiting staff we need to ask what extra-curricular activities they would be willing to offer the school during final interview, e.g. EBA is an aerobics instructor. In future, we will also look at what our present staff have to offer in terms of extra-curricular activities.

### **Action steps**

- Allow teachers to be paid for time given to extra-curricular activities at the same rate as teaching, not Fritids
- CDL to continue to have strong links with Fritids Board in order to assess how to widen the choice of activities for the secondary students in particular, but also for the Primary children (where Fritids is oversubscribed). A capacity increase is required.
- Promote Duke of Edinburgh to Danish section
- Investigate possibility of students taking Silver Duke of Edinburgh Award
- We are looking into extending the SFO for the international students due to the existence of a large waiting list.
- Add extra curricular involvement to school reports

### **Conclusions**

Significant progress has been made in this area. However we can see the potential for improving even further in 2016-2017. In particular, we would like to encourage all secondary students to log and be rewarded for their extra curricular activities. Furthermore, the school needs to look actively into how it can reward those who participate and it be worth visiting other schools to find out good practice.

## **Audit of Subject Offer at Rygaards School**

### **Successes**

We have conducted a review of the Religious Education Curriculum in the School which has involved the Primary teaching staff in 2015. The working group met 6 times, including two whole days to evaluate the RE Curriculum offer and propose revisions. As a result of this, a new Catholic Religion Programme has been introduced for the Roman Catholic Students. In addition, a revised programme for non-Catholics has been piloted in Years 3 and 4. The yearly teaching plan has been written. In secondary, a Religion co-ordinator has been appointed in November 2015 with the aim of taking this forward in secondary. A Religion Co-ordinator was appointed in August 2015 in Primary. We had an INSET day by Sister Veronique from Paris in August 2015, about embedding Assumption Education and values at all levels. This was well-received by teaching staff and was the beginning of closer links with other Assumption Schools. The Head of RCFA and

SJA visited the Bondy Assumption School in Paris in June 2015, in addition to the Mother House of the Assumption Sisters.

As part of his ILMP course, CDL carried out work on the Learner Profile. This involved interviews with students and targeted surveys of learning. This was based on the research of John Hattie and the practical application of this research by James Nottingham (who spoke at the school in 2014 during a whole staff INSET day in August)

The teaching of Danish across the school was reviewed during regular bi-monthly meetings with the Danish teachers and Heads of School. In conjunction with our membership of DISN, a pilot project to publish a book for 7-11 Year olds is underway. The first draft is nearly ready and will be piloted by beginner classes in the Primary School. Links between Danish teachers and their counterparts in other DISN schools have been embedded.

In terms of sport, two co-ordinators have been appointed in the primary school (JGR, JLI) with the remit of increasing links with other DISN schools to host more sports meetings, including friendly matches. In addition, they have been briefed to audit the sports curriculum during 2016. There is already an increased frequency of friendly matches with NGG. JGR has been on a sports coordinator course in 2015.

### **Needs further development**

Further help needs to be given to Religion teachers in the form of weekly and medium-term plans to help them navigate their way around the new Catholic materials and modify them for use by non-Catholic students.

A learner profile has not been finalized. However, work will continue on this in 2016, e.g. we will look at a Learner Profile Wheel and a possible slogan which the school will recognize and will become part of our values (e.g. website, in class, in assemblies)

Danish teaching as a foreign language needs to be embedded in the practice of the Danish teachers. This was linked to SJA's ILMP project. The recruitment of a Head of Danish to spearhead and champion the subject is felt to be a priority to ensure that we recruit and retain the best staff.

### **Action steps**

- Research based practice is in the 2016 Action Plan e.g. Visible Learning
- Staff will have further training on Hattie
- New staff will be brought up to speed on Hattie and Visible Learning
- Investigate recruiting Head of Danish
- Develop links with CIS to share good practice with the Head of Danish there
- Better communication to parents needed regarding student destinations e.g. Danish Gymnasiums
- Audit of whole school sport curriculum in 2016
- JLI will attend a COBIS Sports Teacher course in 2016
- Visit by Assumption School Lyon in 2016 to Year 6 and Class Liaison on the joint topic of WW2 (the Resistance and the Jews in Lyon and Denmark – Comparative Study)
- Audit of RE in secondary – currently reviewing textbooks and teaching materials.
- Investigating the possibility of an IGCSE in Religion
- Investigate the possibility of offering Spanish as an IGCSE subject within the formal curriculum.

### **Conclusions**

Much has been done to improve the curriculum offer at the school. However, Danish remains a priority and this has been complicated by high staff turnover and a mismatch of expectations between staff and leadership.

Religion remains a high priority and this is especially important now that the school owns the buildings and visits by the Assumption Sisters are less frequent. We are pleased to have closer links with other Assumption Schools.

Across the whole school, we will prioritise improving immediate feedback during the lessons to children and helping them to self-evaluate their own work. This is seen to be a key method of improving attainment at all levels and in all subjects.

## **Evaluation of Pay and Conditions at Rygaards School**

### **Present situation**

Rygaards International School has been very successful in recruiting experienced, enthusiastic and well-qualified teachers, familiar with and experienced in British-style education; teachers who are lively, energetic and committed professionals who have a desire to contribute to the Teaching Team and the community spirit of Rygaards. On the whole, we have also been able to recruit native English speakers.

Teachers' wages and conditions are competitive compared to what is offered by the vast majority of other private schools in the area.

The school has also had good success in supporting internal staff members who have aspired to leadership and the majority of the present leadership team were recruited internally.

### **The challenges**

The greatest challenge is recruitment from outside Denmark of leaders and in particular leaders for the International School. The school made the decision several years ago to recruit at least one member of the Leadership Team externally, someone who had international experience and who was experienced in British-style education, someone who could bring new knowledge to the team. It quickly became apparent that this was difficult for several reasons:

1. The pay that we could offer them. This is regulated by collective bargaining agreements.
2. The fringe benefits we could pay out. Removal expenses, flights home, children's school fees etc. These are also controlled by law.

The above are in no way competitive with what is offered in the wage packages of other international schools.

With regards to teaching staff we have been very fortunate in that we have, on the whole, been able to recruit quality staff locally. However, when we have needed to recruit internationally, the same problem has appeared. It is very difficult to compete in the international schools market due to the level of remuneration that is possible within Danish collective bargaining agreements.

### **Action Steps**

Wages are regulated centrally by the unions and the Ministry of Finance. So far we have had no success in our appeal for dispensation for international schools, dispensation that would enable us to pay a higher wage. However, it has become clear that when we recruit staff, we need to make clear the benefits of moving to and working in Denmark. Denmark is an attractive country to work in for several reasons. This must be used proactively in recruitment of staff.

We will continue to work with the Danish International Schools Network, the Danish Private Schools Association (Danmarks Privatskoleforening) and the school unions (Friskole Læereforening) to improve the situation as mentioned above.

## Summary

The evaluation of the present staffing and organisation structure of the school is very much part of this challenge. Please see this evaluation.

# The Evaluation of the Organisational Structure of Rygaards School

## Present situation

At present, the structure of the school is very flat, in line with practice in private schools in Denmark. The leadership of the school has a Principal (Skoleleder) and four Heads of School (Afdelingsleder), two for the Danish School and two for the International School. One of the Heads is "Souchef", this is a requirement of Danish private school law. The Leadership works as a team and is on a daily basis referred to as the Leadership Team.

Teachers are divided into teams. In the Danish School there are three teams: Annex, Middle School and Upper School. In the International, there are also three teams: Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3/4. The teams are organised by a coordinator, one for each team. The coordinators have no leadership responsibility as such but help the Heads in the running of team meetings and other administrative tasks.

## The challenges

The school has grown substantially over the last ten years and there is a need to be able to delegate leadership responsibility to Middle Management. As it has turned out, this is not so straight forward as we thought it would be. The Teachers' Union does not accept a teacher being given leadership responsibility. The union argues that these teachers would need to be put on a leader's contract.

We have been in dialogue with Denmark's Private School Association to discuss the possibility of introducing another level of leadership. The conclusion is that we must use the present system, as it is unlikely that changes will be made in the near future.

## Action Steps

- The school needs to re-examine the flat team leadership model.
- Is it possible to organise the leadership in another way and fully utilise the wage scales that are available so that a level of Middle Management is made possible?
- Is it possible, by putting the coordinators on leadership contracts and by differentiating wages, to create the different levels of leadership?
- Could the presently unused "vice-head" wage level be used so as to create the structure? Note: By law a school can only have one "vice-head"; Rygaards has been given dispensation to have two.

## Summary

There is no easy solution at present. Further discussions need to be carried out in the light of the next Strategic Plan that is written for the school.