

COLLIS PRIMARY SCHOOL

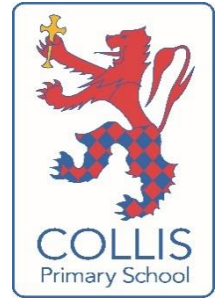
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May 2022

Dear Parents and Carers

Collis Governor Board Newsletter - Update from the Spring Term

During the Spring term governors attended five committee meetings and a full board meeting, together with dedicated meetings on safeguarding, recruitment, the Parent Focus Group and individual monitoring visits to school clubs and on support to disadvantaged pupils. One of the most enjoyable and valuable school visits are our regular Governor Mornings where we attend a school assembly and take questions from the pupils. On these mornings, we also spend time with each of the classes in our year group and get the chance to participate in their work and talk to the children and their teachers. When a governor joins Collis, they are aligned with a particular year group and they stay with that year group as they progress through the school so we get to know and watch them progress. This time we also had the opportunity to meet the School Council who were very articulate and confident in sharing their views and ideas on improvements they would like to see, particularly around arrangements to improve break times.

Ofsted

The Committees reviewed and discussed a range of topics, reports, policies and procedures. The key focus for the Resources Committee was ensuring that the school could achieve a balanced budget in each of the next three years. For the Achievement and Standards Committee, the focus continues to be on pupil progress, which is showing excellent results, and on the continuing work undertaken in response to the requirements of the revised Education Inspection Framework that Ofsted launched in May 2019 and has been used for inspections since September 2019. Outstanding schools were previously exempt from further inspections, but they have now been included within the inspection cycle, and this includes Collis.

For those outside education, understanding the role of Ofsted and their work is often limited to just knowing that they are the body that assesses schools and then awards a grade - Outstanding, Good or Requires Improvement. The detail of what sits under those grades is less known, but clearly when parents are seeking a school for their child the Ofsted grade can influence their decision. Collis was graded as Outstanding in its last Ofsted inspection in December 2014. Under that inspection framework, the final grade awarded to a school was, in simple terms, one of 'best fit'. If a school was judged as outstanding in the majority of the criteria assessed and, say, very good or good in the others, then Outstanding would be the most appropriate grade to award. This is no longer the case, with the 'best fit' criteria replaced with an 'exacting' criterion - to get outstanding you need to be outstanding in all areas.

Harder to Gain Outstanding Grade

Since our last inspection, Collis has continued to seek out every opportunity to improve the quality of teaching, to enrich the curriculum and to build a forward-thinking wellbeing strategy. We use leading edge educational research to enable our teachers and pupils to benefit from best practice in improving the outcomes for all pupils and to make their school days at Collis exceptional.

So why is the new framework proving a challenge for schools?

Aside from the fact that the pandemic hit all schools at the time they were starting to work on preparing the changes required (and in Collis's case the build as well), the criteria under the revised standard is very different in its focus and the type of evidence Ofsted will be looking for.

One of the considerations Ofsted had with the previous framework was a concern that the emphasis on particular subject attainment levels could lead to a narrowing of the curriculum. Consequently, the content of lessons, sequencing of lessons and how lessons are to be taught, all have to be revised to ensure that the knowledge shared with the children becomes 'sticky' and goes into their long-term memory.

Ofsted's aim is to focus school inspections on the quality of the curriculum.

1. Children must be accessing the full curriculum - what children and young people are actually learning, with clear progression in each subject, ensuring that the curriculum is successfully adapted, designed or developed to be ambitious and meet the needs of pupils with SEND.
2. Looking beyond data and test results to understand how schools are preparing pupils for the next stage of education, employment or training.
3. Teacher subject knowledge should be secure in each subject.
4. Inspecting and grading schools on the areas that matter most to parents:
 - Quality of education
 - Behaviour and attitudes
 - Personal development
 - Leadership and management

Only 14% of Outstanding schools have remained Outstanding after inspection since September 2021

The criteria to achieve a good or an outstanding grade under the new framework has significantly broadened. A school must now meet all 18 x criteria to be graded 'good', both consistently and securely and a further 5 x criteria to be graded outstanding.

How exacting it is to meet the revised expectations is probably reflected in the fact that since September 2021, of all the schools previously graded as Outstanding that have been inspected under the new framework, only 14% have retained a grade of Outstanding. 86% have seen a reduction of at least one level of grading but this may not mean they have not made progress and improvements since their last inspection.

Despite all the disruption over the last two years, Governors and staff have retained their focus on making these changes, but it is a significant ask and a slow process. We are not complacent and remain as ambitious as ever, but we also have to be realistic about the expectations of the new framework.

Collis continues to be an exceptional school and our priority will always be to put the children at the heart of everything we do and that our parents and carers are confident that their children will have every opportunity to realise their potential and develop in a happy and safe culture.

Further details on the Ofsted website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/education-inspection-framework>

Yours faithfully

Mags Thomas



Collis Chair of Governors

