



Welcome to our spring 2016 newsletter.

IONA STEINER SCHOOL 'OUTSTANDING' SAY INSPECTORS [See report here](#)



Inspectors have praised The Iona School in Nottingham after it was judged to be 'outstanding' in all five categories.

The visit by the School Inspection Service (SIS), from February 2-4, found teaching and the curriculum to be outstanding. There is a strong culture of school self-evaluation and improvement and the pastoral care is excellent. The Iona School is part of the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship (SWSF); it is the first Steiner school to be judged outstanding in all categories under the new Common Inspection Framework.

Fiona Stuart, School Manager, said: "We are delighted with the findings of the SIS inspectors; at Iona School, our ethos is to give the children self confidence, love of learning, an ability to work with others and enduring and practical skills. This report is an excellent endorsement of our pupils' hard work and the outstanding support they receive from staff, trustees and parents."

Other SIS observations included:

- "School leaders are visionary"
- "Leadership and management are outstanding"
- "Pupils are rightly appreciative of the inspirational teaching they receive"
- "A number of pupils said that they missed school during school holidays and were delighted when it was time to return"

Kevin Avison, executive officer of the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship (SWSF) said: "The inspectors' findings are a testament to everyone involved at Iona Steiner School and are confirmation that the Steiner approach to education produces well-rounded pupils, a safe environment and supportive community."



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Media Training

Late January saw five of us arrive at Liquid's office in Birmingham for a day of Media Training – Priya from the SWSF, Rachel from Alder Bridge, Adrian from Greenwich, Tracey from York and Chris from Elmfield. I think it's fair to say that we were all quite nervous but we were immediately put at ease by the friendly Liquid staff and the two trainers, Michael and Roger.

The aim of the day was to help us better handle print, radio and television interviews. Before arriving we had all participated in a telephone interview with a journalist about Steiner schools and technology. His only brief was to find a story out of each discussion and then write them up for us to learn from. And boy did we learn! It was fascinating (and horrifying) to see how easily one loose comment could turn the article in a direction we would never have wanted it to go. This exercise proved incredibly effective and immediately had us focused and keen to learn how to avoid such mistakes.

The main thrust of the day was emphasising the importance of always focusing on our key messages and being positive. We were taught very effective techniques for doing this and we had ample chance to practice with one TV and two radio interviews each. After each round of interviews we analysed what had gone well and what could have been improved. By the end of the day we had all dramatically improved and our confidence was incomparable to the start of the day. If anyone in your school is likely to be interviewed by the media at any stage then I would say that this course is essential training. It is no overstatement to say that it could be the difference between a media nightmare and a media success.

Chris Field

We are very grateful to the Trustees of Hermes Trust who gave a grant of £1,000 to support this training.



Rudolf Steiner School

Mbagathi, Nairobi, Kenya

The Rudolf Steiner School is situated on the Maasai plains south of the National Park of Nairobi, where wildlife is still free to roam. The school has 340 children; the vast majority come from disadvantaged homes, where parents struggle to obtain a daily meal and to meet the needs of their family. We have large boarding facilities with 120 children, where those with no parents or difficult home situations are able to live in a secure and protected learning environment.



Our classes are full with motivated and active children, eager to take part in all the activities.

There are four kindergarten groups and classes 1 to 8. We also have a class 9 where children sit for a primary exam needed to enter Kenyan Secondary Schools. The school has an enthusiastic group of capable Kenyan teachers delivering Waldorf education. All teachers attend the Steiner School teacher training modules which take place in the holidays; after completion and assessment they will receive their diploma.

We strive to create a beautiful green environment. The school has a large organic vegetable garden which provides for the mid-day meal. Children also receive tasty millet porridge for their daily morning break. There are a number of cows which provide fresh milk.

Our school's aim is to offer Steiner education to the economically disadvantaged children in the area. Poverty affects many parts of children's lives and



what we offer gives them hope for their future. We have a big need for new sponsors to help pay for a child's education. A small regular donation per month would help give a child the opportunity for a good future. Please consider and email Judith Brown on rssmn@kenyaweb.com for further information. Thank you.

Judith Brown



A New
Perspective on
Learning –
Making English

and Maths Active, Relevant and Fun

As teachers and leaders, we need to look at ways we can increase and embed creative opportunities for learning. Tagtiv8 Active Learning games help you to see unique and innovative ways to combine English, Mathematics and PE. Our games and ideas help unlock the potential of the PE hall and outdoor environment for learning core subjects, while also developing levels of fitness in our children.

Studies show that children who are physically fit are better at absorbing and retaining new information. Our approach not only provides an enjoyable alternative to classroom based learning, but promotes physical activity – crucial when we all face the increasing problem of sedentary lifestyles.

During our active learning sessions, all learners will:

- feel more confident with mathematical fluency, reasoning & problem solving;
- feel more confident with phonics and spelling;
- learn something new;
- feel fitter;
- be smiling...

Children are encouraged to create and develop their own games, which are then shared with schools around the world. <http://tagtiv8.com/> video, <https://vimeo.com/132454530>

Bryn

Conferences:

19th March 2016 LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT with Jane Cooper Head HMI for Schools Inspection Services.

[Mind the Gap conference](#)

[Booking form](#)



Erasmus+

In the dead of winter, near the top of the world, a bustling throng of Upper School teachers, educationalists and curriculum designers met last month for the second transnational event of the ACTS (Acknowledging Creating Thinking Skills) project. The project, which is funded by the European Union via the Erasmus scheme, aims to contribute to the development of a European area of Skills and Qualifications, thereby raising attainment for all students and reducing the numbers of early school leavers. We also hope that any new qualifications will be more suited to the Steiner/Waldorf approach to learning, combining the highly-focused, analytic thinking and memory training involved in formal education with the softer focus, non-verbal, experience of interconnections and context that is often found in non-formal and informal learning.

Beginning on 20th February, in Finland, the recent conference lasted a week. Our charming hosts were Upper School teachers, mostly from schools in and around Helsinki. Delegates arrived from all four of the partner countries: Denmark, Norway and the

United Kingdom, as well as Finland. Most of the visitors, including myself, stayed in



Helsinki and travelled each day to the venue: Snellman Korkeakoulu. Snellman is a Waldorf teacher training college—with over 200 students!—located about 45 minutes from the city and beautifully situated by sea, on a peninsular out among an archipelago of fir-treed islands that look for all the world like a scattering of mossy rocks.

Our work that week was demanding, consisting of daily presentations and lectures, artistic activity (including eurythmy and singing) and a lot of group work, sometimes lasting well into the evening. As Upper School teachers it is our job in this project to feed in to the ‘research’ phase examples of best practice, definitions of thinking, assessment styles—and to try to innovate. In our individual subject areas we began to think about what the core, underlying aims of a qualification equivalent to, say GCSE, might

be, and what learning outcomes might arise from them.

I think we all felt it was a satisfying and productive week. It was the second time this group had worked together—there will be two more—and it feels as if we’re ‘gelling’ as a team. The hosts were marvellous, and everything was very efficiently organised. And we even experienced a traditional Finnish Sauna—which is the one where you leave the sauna and hop into the sea, which we did...in February!

Alistair Pugh



Snellman College

UK Schools represented at this event: Michael Hall, York/Botton, Edinburgh, Wynstones, Brighton, Ringwood, Elmfield, plus one retired teacher (Elmfield, Ringwood, Hereford) and one parent who is a University Lecturer.

The next meeting will be in Norway. UK will host it in the Autumn – venue needed.

Jane Avison



Singing at the well-attended Early Years conference on Leadership, Management and Quality Care, held at Kings Langley on the 29th January 2016. Presentations from SIS Inspector Martin Bradley, SWSF, Advisors and teachers all added to an interesting and enlightening day.

Janni Nicol