



28th June 2016

Dear Parents

From Good To Great (or from strength to strength)

We want to share some exciting news with you. We were delighted last week to hear that we have been awarded National Support School status. This is a superb achievement for Great Missenden School. We have not rested on our laurels as a school graded Outstanding back in 2006, but have gone out to work proactively with other schools. This outward-looking philosophy has also greatly benefited our own school, as we have learned so much from our partner schools. For example, our new assessment system, and our method of book scrutiny have come from these collaborations.

This status has been awarded based on our support for local schools including:

- SEN (Special Educational Needs) provision for two of our linked infant schools
- Open Days for colleagues from other schools to demonstrate Growth Mindset as part of the "Great Learners Project" and other initiatives such as Challenge for All and Food for Life
- Mentoring, INSET days for our Liaison Group of schools and educational advice / demonstration lessons

Our support raises achievement

Since November 2015 we have been working with a junior school in South Bucks which for the last 4 years has been judged by OFSTED as "Requires Improvement". This has been challenging and rewarding work, providing many of our staff with the opportunity to further develop their teaching and leadership skills in joint meetings, coaching and modelling outstanding practice. The school had an OFSTED inspection last week for which we also provided support. The outcome is not publicly available until the report has been finalised – but the school has achieved a "Good" grading, and the value of our support has been recognised. For our staff, taking part in an inspection under the new OFSTED framework has been a valuable experience, sharpening our awareness of OFSTED's priorities and lines of enquiry.

Expanding the Great Missenden MAT (Multi Academy Trust) – Princes Risborough Primary School

Now we take our next step! We became an academy in 2014 – set up as a Multi Academy Trust, with Great Missenden as the only academy in the Trust but with the capacity for other schools to join. The aim of our MAT is to provide an outstanding education for children. It is a primary school-focused MAT, because that is our area of expertise. It is a local MAT – it is important that any school we bring into the MAT is within easy distance of Great Missenden, so we can work together effectively.

We are now in negotiations to take on our first partner school, Princes Risborough Primary School. This is a great opportunity for us. As a Sponsor Academy, we will receive funding directly from the EFA (Education Funding Agency) so we will have the resources to work collaboratively and productively with Princes Risborough.

Our experience has been that this school-to-school support work enlivens and enhances our practice at Great Missenden. It strengthens our school and develops the skills of our teachers and support staff. It is to the credit of Great Missenden, its children, parents, staff and governors that we are able to reach out the hand of friendship to other school communities in this way.

Rozalyn Thomson
Head Teacher

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Great Missenden C of E Combined School
An Academy of Great Missenden Trust

