

Chair's Commentary on the School's year

Each year, the Chair of Governors writes a commentary on what has been going on in the school for the past year. This is my commentary for the 2015-16 year academic year.

Exams and achievement

It has been another amazing year for our school with respect to results. In terms of the primary measure of success, the percentage of students achieving five A* to C grades including English and Maths, 2015/16 was our best year ever. 83% of our students achieved this goal, more than ever before in our school. In terms of the other measures we also had a great year. The headline numbers are:

- 86% of students achieved A*-C in both English and mathematics
- 87% of students achieved grades A*-C in English Language
- 93% of students achieved grades A*-C in maths
- 32% of students achieved A*/A in English
- 30% of students achieved A*/A in maths
- 30% of all grades were A* or A

To put in perspective just how good these results are, in terms of student progress, they put us in the top 12% of schools nationally, meaning that seven out of eight schools did less well than Gillotts this year. This is our best ranking ever and another tremendous achievement for the school. On many of the measures we are the top performing state secondary school in Oxfordshire.

As those of you who have read my report in previous years will remember, I am equally focussed on the performance of our less able students and those who are disadvantaged in one way or another. We are Henley's community secondary school and we have a responsibility to meet the educational needs of all our students. I am therefore very pleased to report that once again, 100% of our students achieved at least one A* - G grade. This shows that we have kept all of our students engaged with education throughout their time with us which is an important part of our social responsibility. Our students with special educational needs and from disadvantaged backgrounds also did particularly well so I feel we have satisfied our responsibility to enable all our students to achieve their potentials.

We had an inspection by Ofsted in April of this year and I was delighted to see that they too recognise the progress the school is making. I am particularly pleased that the report states that in 2015 we were in the top 25% of schools in the country on the basis of the progress that our students make. It also recognises how successfully we have tackled raising the attainment and progress of high prior attainment students, which was a key area of focus for us after the last inspection in 2012.

The report states very clearly that, in order to make the shift from 'very good' to outstanding, we need to ensure that students eligible for the pupil premium and SEN students make at least as much progress as students without these barriers do nationally and that we further aim to close gaps between these students and other students in the school. We thought this was a very challenging target but in fact we have more than achieved it in the 2016 results! We still think there is a job of work to do to ensure we achieve this year in, year out, so we are not complacent but it is good to see we had responded even before the target was set!

I feel particularly proud that one pupil in the inspection, I think in Y11, described the school as 'a joyful place'. I have never felt that high attainment should come at the cost of a miserable time at school. I think this sentiment shows that in our school, it doesn't.

So the results are excellent again but one of the things I am proudest about is that the Leadership Team never rests on its laurels. The Ofsted report identified the areas in which we still have room for improvement. Within a

few days of the visit, Catharine and her colleagues had prepared the plan for addressing them. Similarly with the exam results, the Leadership Team has analysed them and identified the action we need to take to improve still further. Last year I wrote that “the last two years have not been a lucky blip but the results of a sustained and systematic approach to improving the school”. This year I can write “the last three years have not been a lucky blip but the results of a sustained and systematic approach to improving the school”. And thanks to the approach and determination of the Leadership Team, I look forward to adding to the number each year!

Buildings and infrastructure

As many of you will recall, we have an ambition to bring about a transformation of the school facilities by selling a little used part of the school’s land and investing the funds in improving the school. I am delighted to say that this year, we have passed some major milestones along the road to this goal.

On 14th April, the Neighbourhood Plan was voted on by the people of Henley and approved by 82% to 18%. This outcome and the certainty it brought has allowed us to start to make real progress.

Our first task was to appoint the professional advisors who will help us through the process. We identified three kinds of advisor that we will need; a Lead Consultant to oversee the renovation project, solicitors to provide legal support and a land agent to help with selling the land. Companies to fulfil all three of these roles have now been identified and appointed and their appointments have been confirmed by the Education Funding Agency. Having made the appointments, we held a kick-off meeting with all of them and the project is now up and running.

Work is currently running on two tracks, one focussed on getting us in to a position to sell the land and the other establishing a ‘basis for design’ for the renovation project.

With regard to the sale of the land, there is inevitably a wide range of legal and commercial issues to be addressed. The land agent and legal advisors are grinding through these with the aim of marketing the land during the first half of next year.

With regard to the renovation project, the Lead Consultant has been focusing effort on the layout of pitches and sports facilities. It has always been a requirement for the renovation project that it should deliver better sports facilities than we have now. Given that we are selling a part of the land, this needs to be achieved using less space.

I am delighted to say that the Lead Consultant has found ways to do this. By taking advantage of modern synthetic surfaces and levelling and renewing our grass pitches, we will be able to deliver a real step-change improvement in the school’s sports provision. We will also be able to set up the facilities in a way that will maximise their usefulness to the wider community and increase the value of the school to the people of Henley.

Another area of discussion with the Lead Consultant has been around minimising disruption and providing benefit for students in the school during the project. From the beginning, one of the guiding principles has been that outcomes for these students should not be adversely affected. However, we want to do better than that. We want to ensure that they get real benefit from the project, even though they will have left by the time it is finished. We will do this by trying to ensure that each year we complete a package of sub-projects that will deliver real benefits immediately. And we are looking at ways to use the works to give tangibility to lessons such as creative technologies and maths.

There is a long way to go with this project and no doubt many bumps in the road still to be negotiated. However, we are on track so far and are all hugely looking forward to getting the renovation work underway.

21st century technology in the classroom

Over the past couple of years, I have referred to our efforts to leverage the mobile devices our students routinely carry to enhance teaching and learning. I am pleased to say that these devices are now routinely supporting education in our school. And as so often, our students have impressed me with their adaptability and

ability to take advantage of new opportunities with little drama. Not only have the devices provided individual students with additional tools for their education, they have also become vehicles for collaborative working. Students regularly use their devices to capture pictures of experiments, look up references and share their findings. We are now moving to make it possible for students to use their mobile devices to print on the school's printers. Each student will have an allowance with opportunity to buy more if they need it. I feel the school has developed practices to ensure the devices, which are a routine part of our students' lives outside of school, benefit them in school as well.

To sum up...

Just as I said last year I feel proud and lucky. I believe I am Chair of Governors at a happy school at which the students really achieve their potential. We have outcomes that have put us in the top 12% of schools nationally for student progress and staff, a leadership team and a governing body that are doing all they can to ensure that the school provides the best possible education for Henley's young people. And we have the hugely exciting prospect of improving the school facilities to do so even better. You really couldn't ask for more!

Statutory Annual Report to parents on the effectiveness of arrangements for SEN and Disability

The school's SEN Policy was last reviewed and amended by the Governors, Headteacher and SENCo in February 2015. Its aims and objectives are set out below.

Gillotts values the abilities and achievements of all its students and is committed to providing, for each student, the best possible environment for learning by:

- ensuring the identification of SEND as early as possible in students' school careers
- monitoring progress
- working collaboratively with parents/carers and outside agencies
- involving students and parents in decision-making
- personalising learning for students
- promoting independence
- ensuring that the responsibility for SEND held by all staff and governors is carried out
- removing barriers to achievement and success

Students with SEN at Gillotts continue to make good progress in all areas of school-life: academic, social and emotional. Of the 27 students on the SEN register in Year 11, 15 achieved 5 A*-C and 13 achieved 5 A*-C including English and Maths. All 27 achieved at least four qualifications. These are the best results for students with SEND for three years with 62% of the total grades being A*-C.

Staff have continued to receive training and guidance throughout the year and SEND were at the heart of the School Development Plan, with a particular focus on literacy difficulties. Besides the regular staff briefings, outside speakers were invited: thus Professor Amanda Kirby and Dr Claudia Wilson delivered lectures on "Literacy Difficulties in the Classroom" and "Executive Functioning Difficulties" respectively. Teachers were also given the opportunity to strengthen their expertise and understanding of a variety of SEND through self-directed twilight sessions and group work. A key aspect of the work was to give professionals time to reflect on their own practice and share successful classroom strategies with colleagues. This year's main focus is to consolidate expertise and embed good practice in the classroom so that *all* teachers are effective teachers of SEND and consistently meet the needs of *all* students in the classroom.

While the implementation of the new SEN Code of Practice has been at the forefront of the Learning Support Faculty development plan over the past few years, the introduction of the new GCSE syllabuses and their implications for students with SEND are now a priority. As a consequence, the range of Literacy and Numeracy Interventions offered at KS3 and KS4 has significantly developed to reflect the demands and recently identified learning and teaching needs of the new syllabuses. The Faculty is also keen to develop its range of assistive technology; for example we have invested in reading pens to support students in GCSEs while still promoting their independence.

Gillotts' admissions are managed by Oxfordshire County Council. As an Academy, we publish our Admissions arrangements each year; however our arrangements follow the current published LA admission rules for Years 7 to 11 at community and voluntary controlled secondary schools. A summary of the arrangements, including for pupils with disabilities, is published each year in our Prospectus. Our Accessibility Plan was reviewed and developed further in June 2015. Curriculum Access actions include a focus on differentiation. There are lunchtime clubs taking place most days in Learning Support, which support students in developing friendships and social skills in a safe environment. A proportion of staff briefings are used for small groups of teachers to meet with Learning Support Assistants to share strategies to meet an individual's needs. To ensure good Information Access, the school continues to work closely with the LA support services. Our Accessibility Plan (premises), adopted in 2003, was fully implemented by August 2006 and has been reviewed to ensure it continues to meet current requirements.

Catharine Darnton
Headteacher

David Gorsuch
Chair of Governors

EQUALITY OBJECTIVES – Monitoring progress

	Equality Objective	Success Criteria	December 2013				December 2014		December 2015		December 2016	
I.	Progress											
	To improve progress for identified groups: (SDP12/13)	Within 12 months Gaps narrowed for high prior attainment	A*/A 2011 26% 2012 29% 2013 33%				A*/A 2014 42%		A*/A 2015 24%		A*/A 2016 30%	
	Students with high prior attainment	Within 2 years Gaps removed for high prior attainment and narrowed for SA	5+ A*/A 2011 28% 2012 32% 2013 37%				5+A*/A 2014 46%		5+A*/A 2015 23%		5+A*/A 2016 30%	
	Students on the special educational needs register at School Action	After 4 years Gaps removed for high prior attainment and removed for SA										
			Best 8	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16			
			Non-SEN	374	381	388	386	365	362			
			K	-	284	310	313	261	298			

	Equality Objective	Success Criteria	December 2013	December 2014	December 2015	December 2016
2.	<p>Exclusions</p> <p>To reduce exclusions for all students, but particularly for those with special educational needs (SDP12/13)</p> <p>Current: 2011-12, 77 fixed term exclusions (all five days or fewer) administered to a total of 37 students (4% of school population)</p>	<p>Within 12 months Redeveloped After-School School provision providing a more effective alternative to exclusion</p> <p>Within 2 years Redeveloped caretaker's cottage as a dedicated base for KS4 alternative provision</p> <p>After 4 years Alternative provision at Gillotts linked into overarching programme for Oxfordshire's young people</p>	<p>2012/13 7 exclusions; four students with SEN, three students without</p>	<p>2013/14 2 exclusions; both students with SEN</p> <p>Funding secured to complete redevelopment of caretaker's cottage</p>	<p>2014/15 1 exclusion; no SEN</p> <p>Redevelopment of caretaker's cottage completed</p>	<p>2015/16 16 exclusions; 10 students – seven with SEN</p> <p>Discussions underway re future of alternative provision in Oxfordshire</p>

December 2014 – Pay equality*NB Calculated using FTE salaries*

	Teachers - Main		Teacher - Upper		Support staff	
	Number	Average salary	Number	Average salary	Number	Average salary
Male	9	£31,056	7	£41,005	11	£16,038
Female	11	£30,309	26	£39,734	39	£17,682

December 2015 – Pay equality*NB Calculated using FTE salaries*

	Teachers - Main		Teacher - Upper		Support staff	
	Number	Average salary	Number	Average salary	Number	Average salary
Male	4	£23,385	9	£40,917	10	£16,567
Female	13	£27,192	24	£40,214	44	£18,081

December 2015 – Analysis of managers by gender

	Teachers – TLR holders		Support staff – designated line manager	
	Number	Average TLR	Number	Average salary
Male	6	£5949	1	Withheld
Female	12	£6650	12	£24,864

December 2016 – Pay equality*NB Calculated using FTE salaries*

	Teachers - Main		Teacher - Upper		Support staff	
	Number	Average salary	Number	Average salary	Number	Average salary
Male	5	£25,563	10	£37,438	10	£18,458
Female	12	£27,899	30	£37,661	43	£21,424

December 2016 – Analysis of managers by gender

	Teachers – TLR holders		Support staff – designated line manager	
	Number	Average TLR	Number	Average salary
Male	7	£6373	1	Withheld
Female	13	£6268	11	£28,709