

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 2014-15 year academic year.

Exams and achievement

A school's primary purpose is Teaching and Learning. The primary measure of success for a school like Gillotts is exam results at the end of Year 11. It is therefore fantastic for me to be able to report that our 2015 results were our second best ever, second only to our truly exceptional year last year. The headline numbers are:

- 73% of students achieved at least five A* - C grades including English and Maths
- 24% of all grades were A* or A
- About a quarter of students achieved five or more A* or A grades and about 10% achieved eight or more A* or A grades

These are really excellent results, positioning us amongst the very best Oxfordshire secondary schools and in the top 25% of schools nationally, in terms of students' progress. They are a tribute to all of the staff in the school.

I was equally pleased to see that 99% of our students achieved five or more A* - G grades. We are Henley's community school. We have an obligation, which we feel very keenly, to ensure that every one of our students achieves his or her potential. This figure shows that we succeed in keeping almost all our students engaged with education throughout their time with us. From the point of view of our social responsibilities, I think that is just as important.

So the results are excellent again but one of the things I am proudest about is the Leadership Team's commitment to continuous improvement. Within the overall success story, there are high points and low points. Within days of the results coming out, Catharine and the team were analysing them to identify where we could do better and to make sure we do. The last two years have not been a lucky blip but the results of a sustained and systematic approach to improving the school. As a consequence, I believe we can look forward to continued high performance in the future.

Buildings and infrastructure

During the year, we have continued our programme of investing in school improvements that will have lasting value. The programme has included the work we have carried out on the underground pipework and heating. Although not apparent, these works are of vital importance to the school, ensuring aside from anything else that we can keep it open. Some of the work is more obvious such as improvements to toilets and work on windows and roofs. Keeping water out is as important as keeping it in! Some of what has been done is about making Gillotts a nicer place in which to teach and learn. I hope some of you will have noticed the wooden cladding we have added to the front of the school. The timber for this came from one of our iconic Wellingtonias that died and had to be taken down. The school's trees are an essential part of its character and I think it is great that this tree continues to provide benefit to the school in a new form. We also have enough timber over to use on the back of the school so that too can be improved.

I got to know the school when my older daughter came here as a student. She is now in her third year at Cardiff university. When I first came here, everyone was very critical of the condition of the school and with good reason. There were leaks, heating failures and to be honest, it looked pretty tatty. Bit by bit it has steadily improved until, today, the condition of the buildings is not really an issue. I think it is a tribute to the efforts of all the staff that they have achieved so much at times when funding for schools has been under such pressure.

These incremental, small scale improvements have made a tremendous difference to the school but as you know, we are looking to the longer term as well. You may remember that I reported last year that we are hoping to sell a little used part of our land for housing as part of the Neighbourhood Plan. We will invest the money we raise in making Gillotts the community school Henley deserves and one it can be proud of. The big ticket parts of the exercise will include a new hall, providing an inspiring space for performing arts, a new Creative Technologies Centre for teaching creative subjects in ways relevant to the 21st century and improved sports facilities. We are as committed to this goal as ever and we passed a major milestone last year when we got approval for the sale from the Secretary of State. However, as those of you who live in or close to Henley will be aware, the Neighbourhood Plan process itself has hit a few bumps along the road. These have caused delay. Currently, the Plan has passed examination by South Oxfordshire District Council and we are expecting the vote by Henley residents to be in Spring next year.

The delays with the Plan have not changed our goals but will inevitably affect the timing. An absolute pre-condition for us undertaking the work is that it should not adversely impact the education of students in the school while it is underway. To ensure this, we are phasing the work over three years and four summer holidays. If the Neighbourhood Plan is approved in Spring next year, we will start work in Summer 2017. This is a year later than we had hoped. It is disappointing but the progress of the Plan really is outside our control so we will have to live with it. We will keep you posted as the process moves on.

21st century technology in the classroom

Last year, I talked about our plans to transform the use of IT in the school by moving to a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) model. We had recognised that most students carry around a tremendous aid to teaching and learning in the form of a mobile device...and we had been doing everything we could to keep it turned off!

Since then, the rollout programme has started with students now using their own devices in all Years. Thanks to the effort the school put into developing an appropriate infrastructure, we seem, after a few teething troubles, to have the system running smoothly and safely. One of our concerns was that nobody should be handicapped by not being able to afford an appropriate device. In response, the school has put in place schemes to provide financial support for students who might not be able to afford something suitable. Already, the benefits we foresaw are starting to appear...more immediate access to information, videoing of physical activity and so on. There is still a way to go, not least because I think that the full potential of BYOD will only become apparent as we actually use it but it is great to have it underway.

School funding and the future of education in Britain

So as I hope you can see, your school is doing great and we are doing everything we can to make sure it continues to do so. However, there is a black cloud on the horizon in the form of reduced funding for education. In recent years, spending on education has been flat in cash terms. Of course, this has meant we have been better off than the 'non-ring-fenced' departments of government but it still means our income has been declining in real terms. Now, the government is planning to squeeze education spending even tighter while, naturally, the pressure for pay rises among teaching staff has been growing. Given that about 80% of the school's costs are staff related, this will have a big impact.

As a school, we also suffer from being part of one of the 40 worst funded Education Authorities in the country. Due to various historical accidents, the average funding per pupil in the best funded 10% of authorities is 50% higher than the average funding per pupil in the worst funded 10%. This is obviously unfair but the government has been reluctant to tackle the problem. At a time of flat or falling education spending, improving funding of the worst funded schools will inevitably mean reducing the funding of the best funded.

Now however, there seems to be genuine will to tackle the issue. The government is proposing a fairer funding formula to be consulted on in 2016 and introduced in 2017. If, like me, you think it is unfair that your children

should be discriminated against in terms of funding their education, I urge you to take an interest and respond to the consultation when it is available. I also encourage you to take an interest in the overall picture of education funding. Of course, every government department thinks it should be a special case but I think education has a better argument than most. Governments are always telling us that our children are our future and that we are slipping behind in the world. The way to address these issues is not by cutting education funding. I urge you to take an interest and make your views known.

Finally to sum up, exactly 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 put us in the top 25% of schools and staff, Leadership Team and governing body that are doing all they can to ensure that the school provides the best possible education for Henley's young people. 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 24 students on the SEN register in Year 11, 10 achieved 5 A*-C and 6 achieved 5 A*-C including English and Maths. All 24 achieved at least one qualification. 50% made expected progress in English and 48% in maths.

Staff receive on-going support in meeting the needs of students with SEN. Over the past year the focus has been to support and prepare staff (teaching and non-teaching) to understand the implications of the New Code of Practice that came into force on 1 September 2014. Staff continue to receive on-going training sessions in staff briefings / meetings with various foci such as identification of SEN in the classroom, effective differentiation in the classroom, and the importance of text readability in secondary schools. This year we are working with Professor Amanda Kirby on an extended staff development programme in relation to dyslexia and dyspraxia. This is linked to wider work with our partner primary schools to support earlier identification and intervention.

We have also been proactive in implementing of the new SEN Code of Practice. We have reviewed the needs of all the students who were previously designated as School Action and School Action Plus against the new criteria for School Support. The process for transition from Statements to Education and Health Care Plans will continue for some years, led by OCC, but we have already been involved in Transfer Reviews for eight students. We have radically altered the structure and function of Learning Support, to focus on short term interventions, particularly in English and mathematics, whilst also creating the flexibility to assign support to individual students where and when it is needed.

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 every day 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																		
1.	<p>Progress</p> <p>To improve progress for identified groups: (SDP12/13)</p> <p>Students with high prior attainment</p> <p>Students on the special educational needs register at School Action</p>	<p>Within 12 months Gaps narrowed for high prior attainment</p> <p>Within 2 years Gaps removed for high prior attainment and narrowed for SA</p> <p>After 4 years Gaps removed for high prior attainment and removed for SA</p>	<p>A*/A 2011 26% 2012 29% 2013 33%</p> <p>5+ A*/A 2011 28% 2012 32% 2013 37%</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Best 8</th> <th>2010-11</th> <th>2011-12</th> <th>2012-13</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Non-SEN</td> <td>374</td> <td>381</td> <td>388</td> </tr> <tr> <td>K</td> <td>-</td> <td>284</td> <td>310</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Best 8	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	Non-SEN	374	381	388	K	-	284	310	<p>A*/A 2014 42%</p> <p>5+A*/A 2014 46%</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>2013-14</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>386</td> </tr> <tr> <td>313</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	2013-14	386	313	<p>A*/A 2015 24%</p> <p>5+A*/A 2014 23%</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>2013-14</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>365</td> </tr> <tr> <td>261</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	2013-14	365	261
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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>2015/16 1 exclusion; no SEN</p> <p>Redevelopment of caretaker's cottage completed</p>																		

	Equality Objective	Success Criteria	December 2013		December 2014		December 2015	
3.	Diversity of the workforce Analyse our data so we understand the diversity of our workforce (eg age, gender, ethnicity) Analyse our data on pay so we can explore issues of pay equality, including the gender pay gap	Within 12 months Analysis complete Within 2 years Analysis complete	Male 27%	Female 73%	Male 24%	Female 76%	Male 23	Female 77
			Ethnic Group	Percentage	EG	Percentage	EG	Percentage
			White-British	89	W-B	90	W-B	92
			White-Other	7	W-O	6	W-O	4
			Black	1	Black	0	Black	0
			Asian	2	Asian	2	Asian	1
			Other	1	Mixed	1	Mixed	2
					NR	1	NR	2
					Other	1	Other	0
			Age	Percentage	Age	Percentage	Age	Percentage
			<25	7	<25	3	<25	3
			25-34	23	25-34	21	25-34	21
			35-44	25	35-44	28	35-44	29
			45-54	32	45-54	31	45-54	30
			55-64	11	55-64	15	55-64	15
			≥65	2	≥65	2	≥65	2
					Pay equality – see below		Pay equality – see below	

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