

Chair of Governors Commentary

2017-18

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 2017-18 academic year.

Exams and achievement

As my first sentence always says, a school's primary purpose is Teaching and Learning. I am therefore delighted to be able to report that our school continues to perform exceptionally well. As I mentioned last year, schools are transitioning from using the historical A* to G grades to new measures based on a scale 9 to 1. At the same time, the metrics by which schools are judged are moving from the number of students obtaining A* to C grades to Progress 8 and Attainment 8. As governors, it has taken a bit of effort for us to 'get our eyes in' on the new measures and I expect it is difficult for you too! However, I think the graphic below, taken from the government's school performance website, shows pretty well that the school is negotiating the transition very well!

Progress 8 score

Above average 0.36

[More score details](#) 

Grade 5 or above in English & maths GCSEs



Attainment 8 score



EBacc average point score



For more detail see <https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/>

These results put us fifth among all the secondary schools in Oxfordshire in terms of our Progress 8 score (i.e. in the top 15%), seventh in terms of our Attainment 8 score and fifth in terms of students achieving Grade 5 or above in English and Maths.

These are excellent headline numbers but I am equally delighted by the performance of our disadvantaged students. As I always say, education is about focussing in all directions at once. We need to pay attention to the headline measures but also to ensure that success here does not come at the expense of our less fortunate and less capable students. This year, the Progress 8 score of our disadvantaged students is only slightly below that of all students, disadvantaged and not disadvantaged, nationally. Particularly taken in conjunction with the overall outcomes, this is a really great achievement.

These excellent results continue to be achieved against a background of significant funding challenges for schools. As many of you will be aware, education funding has been and remains under great pressure. The government's tendency to fail to fully fund increased staffing costs, which represent more than 80% of the school's total costs, creates challenges for schools and distracts from the core duty of optimising teaching and learning. I am

immensely proud of the way the staff and leadership team of the school has maintained the school's performance while coping with the challenges of declining real terms funding.

The built environment

As a school, we are clear that teaching and learning works best with a good teacher in front of a sensibly-sized class. To ensure this is what we deliver in an environment of falling real-terms funding, we have sought to maximise the amount of money we spend on staffing. While we have ensured that money continues to be spent on those elements essential to the running of the school such as drains, heating and windows, it has meant diverting money away from more cosmetic aspects of school maintenance.

As many of you who have been associated with the school for a while will know, we have a long-term plan to tackle this. Our goal is to sell a little used part of the school's land and use the proceeds to build a new hall, dramatically improve the sporting facilities and to renovate the rest of the school. Unfortunately carrying the plan through has proved far more complex than we envisaged when we started. As I will be pleased to explain to anyone who has a couple of hours spare, a range of unforeseeable factors has made carrying through our plan more difficult and much more time-consuming than we originally envisaged. While we continue to make progress, we still do not have a reliable start date for the project. I can only hope that I will have something more exciting to report in this section next year!

A 21st Century School

Whenever appropriate and when funding allows, we continue to take advantage of 21st century technology to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the school. Woodwork and metalwork are valuable skills but it is computer-aided design and computer-controlled machines that are the fundamentals of manufacturing today. Thanks to a funding contribution from £1800 from Stuart Turner, we have recently acquired a laser cutter and a 3D printer for use in the Creative Technologies department. Our students will be able to use these really get to grips with the manufacturing technologies of today and acquire skills that will really be valuable to them in the coming decades.

We are also taking advantage of technology to facilitate the day-to-day running of the school. We are in the process of moving to a cashless basis for expenditure by students and parents. Cash is a nuisance in a school. It can be lost, stolen or left at home. We foresee that getting rid of the need for cash in school will make everyone's lives easier. The cashless world will include the canteen where, thanks to an excellent agreement negotiated with Pabulum, our caterer, the move from a cash basis to a biometric basis is being achieved at no cost to the school. We are confident that the new system will simplify life for all concerned.

Looking Ahead

So how does the future look for our school? Well, overall, very bright. We have an outstanding team of staff and leaders who, as the results show, are skilfully managing turbulent times in education without impacting educational outcomes. Financially, things are stable with slightly increased student numbers helping to offset the impact of rising costs. We continue to look for and embrace opportunities to leverage 21st Century technology to optimise student outcomes and the running of the school. The biggest uncertainty is around the school renovation project but we are persevering and I am sure we will succeed eventually! For my part, I remain immensely proud of the school, continually impressed by the effort and commitment shown by the people associated with it and very lucky to be Chair of Governors here.

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 December 2018. 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. There were 26 students on the SEN register in Year 11. Their attainment 8 score was 36.3 meaning that their average grade was 3.63 (measured on the new GCSE 9-1 scale). 12 of the students achieved grade 4s and above in both English and mathematics; 15 in English and 13 in mathematics.

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 supporting students with Down syndrome. Besides the regular staff briefings, the work of our SENCo has been supported by working in partnership with the SENCos of our five partner primary schools. SENCo panels took place six times during the year. A key aspect of our work is to give professionals time to reflect on their own practice and share successful classroom strategies with colleagues. This year's main focus has been to share good practice more effectively, through example by improving Student Profiles and their use.

While the implementation of the new SEN Code of Practice has been at the forefront of the Learning Support Team 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 Team is also keen to develop its range of assistive technology; for example we have invested in text to speech software 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 2018. 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 Objective	Success Criteria	Actions required to achieve objective	Aims of the Equality Duty	Protected Characteristics
<p>1.</p>	<p>Progress</p> <p>To improve achievement for identified groups: (Ofsted 2016)</p> <p>Disadvantaged students</p> <p>Student with SEND</p>	<p>Within 12 months Gaps with national non-disadvantaged narrowed</p> <p>Within 2 years Gaps with national non-disadvantaged removed and gaps with national non-SEND narrowed</p> <p>After 4 years Gaps with national non-disadvantaged removed and gaps with national non-SEND removed</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure all students reach their potential, through embedding the use of Assessment for Learning 2. Develop further Heads of House as lead champions for PP students, supported by tutors 3. Focus on improving the quality of teaching, not increasing the number of interventions. 4. Appraisal objective to include specified outcomes for PP and SEN students 5. Develop further learning walks focussed on the progress of PP and SEN students 	<p>Advance equality of opportunity</p>	<p>Disability</p> <p>Gender</p>
<p>2.</p>	<p>Diversity of the workforce</p> <p>Analyse our data so we monitor changes the diversity of our workforce (eg age, gender, ethnicity)</p> <p>Analyse our data on pay so we can monitor issues of pay equality, including the gender pay gap</p>	<p>Within 12 months Analysis complete</p> <p>Within 2 years Analysis complete</p> <p>After 4 years Analysis complete</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct analyses 	<p>Advance equality of opportunity</p> <p>Foster good relations</p>	<p>Race</p> <p>Gender</p> <p>Age</p>

EQUALITY OBJECTIVES – Monitoring progress

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December 2017 – Pay equality

NB Calculated using FTE salaries

	Teachers - Main		Teacher - Upper		Support staff	
	Number	Average salary	Number	Average salary	Number	Average salary
Male	6	£26,274	10	£38,152	7	£19,531
Female	11	£29,269	27	£38,153	47	£21,421

December 2017 – Analysis of managers by gender

	Teachers – TLR holders		Support staff – designated line manager	
	Number	Average TLR	Number	Average salary
Male	8	£6,817	1	Withheld
Female	13	£6,627	11	£29,042

Note analysis of Leadership Team pay is not included due to small numbers and separate reporting in the school's accounts

December 2018 – Pay equality*NB Calculated using FTE salaries*

	Teachers - Main		Teacher - Upper		Support staff	
	Number	Average salary	Number	Average salary	Number	Average salary
Male	4	£27,065	10	£38,871	6	£21,432
Female	7	£31,001	32	£38,883	47	£21,592

December 2018 – Analysis of managers by gender

	Teachers – TLR holders		Support staff – designated line manager	
	Number	Average TLR	Number	Average salary
Male	8	£6,573	2	£26,654
Female	13	£6,760	8	£29,875

Note analysis of Leadership Team pay is not included due to small numbers and separate reporting in the school's accounts