



## **Reading School Academy Trust**

# **Trustees' and Governors' Annual Report to Parents – 2015/6**

October 2016

**This is the fourth Annual Report to parents by the Governors since the School converted to academy status in 2011 (Governors' reports have previously been included in the School's financial statements). It is intended to continue with regular Annual Reports to parents.**

**The report includes some background information on the Academy Trust and the Governing Body, as well as reporting on achievements and events in the 2015/16 School year and the challenges the School faces in the years ahead.**

## **1. HOW IS THE SCHOOL RUN?**

### **Status of the School and the Governing Body**

Reading School is an Academy Trust which operates as an exempt charity and a company limited by guarantee, not having share capital. It is currently a selective secondary day and boarding boys' school. It was previously a Foundation School, and converted to Academy status on 1 February 2011. It has 966 students on its roll as at 7th<sup>t</sup> September 2016 (following an increase in its Year 7 intake to 150), 77 of whom are boarders.

The Governors have responsibility for setting and monitoring the overall strategic direction of the Academy Trust and the School, approving decisions reserved to Governors, and appointing key members of staff.

### **How are Governors appointed?**

The Academy Trust has agreed that the Governing Body will comprise 19 members:

- 4 elected parent governors
- 2 elected staff governors
- 2 governors appointed by the Reading Foundation
- 10 governors appointed by the Academy Trust
- The Headmaster as an *ex officio* member

All Governors are appointed for a period of four years. At the end of their initial term of service, all Governors are eligible for re-appointment for a further term (or re-election as staff governors or as parent governors if they have a student at the School).

Staff vacancies on the Governing Body are filled by election, with the electorate comprising all teaching and associate staff. The staff governors in 2015/16 were Jasbir Chhokar and Sophy Rogers.

To ensure a proper representation of parents, four places on the Governing Body are reserved for parent governors. These places are filled by election, following the notification of vacancies to parents and the invitation of nominations. All parents and carers of students at the School are eligible to stand and the electorate comprises all parents and carers. The next elections are due to be held in November 2016, when there will be three parent governor vacancies, as the periods of office of Jason Bannister, David Fisher and Maggie Stock will come to an end at that date.

The Reading Foundation (the landlord of the School's main site) appoints two governors from amongst its membership.

Appointments to other vacancies on the Governing Body are made by the Academy Trust. Most new Governors will be drawn from the local community and/or will have shown an interest in the well-being of the School and its students. In appointing Governors, there are also procedures for taking account of the mix of skills that should be available to the Governing Body. Vacancies are advertised on the school website, and by other means if appropriate. Potential new Governors are required to submit a letter of interest and CV and are interviewed by the Chair of Governors, the Headmaster

and at least one other Governor, before a recommendation for appointment is presented to a meeting of the Academy Trust. Two new appointments were as made in 2015/16 – Mrs Deidre Smith and Mrs Karen Ross MBE. In addition, Dr Susan Bowen was re-appointed to serve for a further term.

New Governors receive information packs and undertake a tailor-made induction programme, including meeting with the Headmaster, a site visit and induction training from the Chair and Clerk and from external agencies. These induction arrangements were reviewed in the 2015/16 school year to make sure that they are fit-for-purpose, and are will enable new governors to become fully effective in the shortest possible timescale.

### **The current Governing Body**

The governors, as at September 2016, were:

J Bannister *	
S Bowen	
J Chhokar +	
R Childs *	
M N J Faulkner	
D R Fisher * (Vice-Chair in 2016/17)	
R P Huggins §	§ Governor appointed by the Reading Foundation; *
D A Jubb	Elected parent governor;
A K Kay	+ Elected staff governor; #
R J Kenwick (Chair in 2016/17)	Headmaster and <i>ex officio</i>
S Nortcliff	governor.
M L Parsons §	
B Reynaert	
A M Robson #	
S Rogers+	
K Ross MBE	
D Smith	
M Stock *	
One vacancy	

From December 2016, the School will have a full complement of 19 governors. (The Academy Trust has agreed that, on 1<sup>st</sup> December, Mr David Fisher will become a Trust-appointed governor, and three elected parent governors will join the Governing Body on this date.)

The Chair of the Governing Body in 2015/16 was Mr Bob Kenwick, and the Vice-Chair Mrs Angie Kay.

More details of each Governor's background and areas of interest are available on the school's website.

The Clerk to the Governors is Mr Steve Vale.

Governor training is an important issue for the Governing Body, and is a specific responsibility of one of its Committees (the External Relations and Pastoral Care Committee). The Vice-Chair of the Governing Body (Mrs A Kay), was responsible for monitoring the extent and appropriateness of training offered to governors in 2015/16. Inevitably, the budget available for training is limited, and one way of addressing this is to maximize in-house training sessions for governors. In 2015/16, there were in-house sessions run by school staff on strategic options for the future of the School, and on

Boarding. Joint staff-governor training sessions were arranged on the government's PREVENT strategy, aimed at preventing extremist views and violence amongst students, and on safeguarding.

The Chair, Vice-Chair and other members of the Governing Body attend regular briefings provided by Reading Borough Council and the Reading Governors Association

The Governing Body also seeks to maximise the use of on-line training and subscribes to Modern Governor and The Link, which offer a range of on-line briefings and training courses for governors.

### **How do the Governors operate?**

The Governing Body meets six times each year, including an Annual General meeting. All decisions reserved to the Governors are taken by the Governing Body as a whole.

Governor committees also meet five times each year to consider detailed matters and recommend decisions to the full Governing Body. There were four committees in 2015/16:

- Curriculum and Standards
- External Relations and Pastoral Care
- Finance (with an Audit and Compliance Sub-Committee)
- Property and Projects

Additionally, there is a Staff Pay and Performance Committee, and Governors' committees are also appointed and meet when required to hear and adjudicate complaints from parents (and others) and appeals against disciplinary decisions (relating to staff and students).

An Admissions Committee is responsible for approving the Admissions Policy and non-routine admissions.

A committee of Governors, with the participation of an external advisor, undertakes the annual performance review of the Headmaster and monitors his performance and achievements against targets.

Also, *ad hoc* groups of Governors are established as and when required to consider specific issues and make recommendations to the Governing Body.

All key decisions are taken at meetings of the full Governing Body in consideration of reports and recommendations from Governors' committees, the Headmaster, the Business Manager and other staff members. In addition to the Headmaster and Deputy Headteacher, members of staff attend committee meetings when required, to present reports in their areas of responsibility, for example curriculum development and special educational needs.

Periodically, development days are held with Governors, senior staff, trustees of The Reading Foundation (the owners of the main School site) and other specialists. A record of each development day is kept and fed into the work of the committees and the Governing Body.

The Chair of Governors and the Headmaster meet regularly to monitor decision implementation and to review matters affecting staff and students and issues affecting the School.

Individual Governors (known as Link Governors) are allocated to academic subjects within the School, and visit departments, sit in on classes and report back to the relevant Committees on the outcomes. Other link governors assume responsibility for particular areas of School life, for example health and safety, special educational needs, information technology, the CCF, facilities management, sporting activities and boarding. The Link Governor system has continued to prove

very effective in 2015/16, enhancing staff/governor relationships and ensuring that governors are well informed of teaching and learning and other activities in the School.

One governor, Mr David Fisher, acts as the School's Responsible Officer and has an oversight role in relation to all the financial systems and processes of control and risk management that operate throughout Reading School.

The Headmaster is the Accounting Officer and works closely with both the other governors and the senior staff of Reading School.

The day-to-day management of Reading School rests with the Headmaster who has overall responsibility for the School. The Headmaster is responsible for establishing a leadership team, which currently comprises the Business Manager, the Deputy Headteacher and the Assistant Headteachers.

All aspects of the management of the School and the conduct of the Governing Body seek to focus on openness, accessibility and accountability. Governors are encouraged to participate fully in the work of committees and the Governing Body, and are encouraged to bring matters of concern before Governors and to raise any queries with the Headmaster. Annually, after the publication of examination results, Governors undertake a thorough review of the outcomes, and consider implications for the curriculum and pastoral activities within the School.

The detailed administrative work of the Governors is undertaken by the Clerk to Governors, reporting to the Chair.

Reading School has a close working relationship with The Reading Foundation(Registered Charity number 294640) which is landlord of the School's main site and has as its own charitable purpose "to advance the education of the public, and in particular, to endow Reading School".

It also cooperates on a regular basis with the Old Redingensians Association, which comprises alumni of the School, and seeks to support the School in appropriate ways.

### **Risk management**

The Governors have a robust attitude to risk management. The risk register defines and considers risk under the headings of Strategic and Reputational Risks and Operational Risks. All Governors have received training in Safeguarding and the Chair is the designated link Governor with responsibility for child protection. Governors undertake site visits and receive regular reports from staff and the Governors' Health and Safety representative.

A number of policies have been adopted by the Governing Body covering risk and health and safety matters. These are reviewed regularly, including annual reviews of the following policies:

- Health and Safety Statement and Policy
- Risk Assessment Policy
- Register of Risks

The Governors are also responsible for ensuring that proper accounting records are kept and that these disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Academy Trust and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with Companies Acts 2006. They are responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Trust and for taking steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

### **Governor attendance at meetings in 2015/16**

The record of attendance by governors at Governing Body and main committee meetings in 2014/15 is set out in the table below:

<b>Governor</b>	<b>Possible attendance</b>	<b>Actual</b>
J Bannister	16	11
S Bowen	16	13
J Chhokar	14	12
R Childs	16	16
M Faulkner	16	16
D Fisher	16	13
R Huggins	11	9
D Jubb	16	16
A Kay	26	23
B Kenwick	26	20
R Manghnani	16	5
S Nortcliff	16	12
M Parsons	6	2
B Reynaert	16	11
A Robson	26	22
S Rogers	16	10
K Ross	3	3
D Smith	16	14
M Stock	16	15
C Toms	6	6

### **Performance measures**

The primary measures used by the Governors to assess the success of the activities of the School are a 5-year strategic plan, covering 2013 to 2018, which was approved by the Governing Body on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2013, together with a series of annual Operational Plans (the Operational Plan for 2015/16 was approved by the Governing Body in July 2015).

These plans were viewed and discussed by all committees in advance of adoption. The Operational Plan is monitored as a standing agenda item at each committee meeting. The plans continue to place student and staff wellbeing and development at the heart of the School's vision, supported by a robust programme of Continuous Professional Development, as well as a system of peer reviews of the various departments.

The Headmaster is required to report to the Governors regularly at Committee and Governing Body meetings on progress in meeting the targets set out in the Operational Plan, on any corrective actions required in pursuit of the Plan, as well as on Academy performance, personnel matters, university entrance and staff training.

In addition:

- Regular budget monitoring reports are submitted to each meeting of the Finance and Property and Projects Committees;
- The Curriculum and Standards Committee receives a detailed report on performance in external examinations each year, and commissions appropriate actions as a result, including looking at comparative data for other Schools and undertaking self-assessment of School performance;

- All school policies are reviewed at appropriate intervals by the relevant Committee, in accordance with a schedule agreed by Governing Body, including consideration of their value and effectiveness in delivering the aims of the Academy.

## 2. ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE 2015/16

### **2015 examination results**

In reviewing the outcomes for 2015 at its September meeting, the School's Curriculum and Standards Committee noted that Reading School continues to excel in terms of the academic results achieved by its students.

At GCSE, just over 50% of all entries scored A\*, 86.1% of all entries were graded A\*-A, and 96% of boys each achieved at least 5 A\* to A grades. 99.6% of all grades in all subjects were A\* to C grades. According to *The Daily Telegraph* analysis, the School was the 8<sup>th</sup> best state school in terms of GCSE performance.

At AS level, 81.1% achieved A or B grades.

At A Level, 98.4 % of entries achieved grade A\* to C, with 93.8% gaining A\* to B grades – a marked improvement on 2014. Analyses by both *The Times* and *The Daily Telegraph* ranked the School as the 4<sup>th</sup> best performing state school at A level.

As well as these excellent exam results, the School showed significant pupil progress according to Government measures (e.g. Progress 8) and was in the top 10% of all schools nationally for value-added progress and top 10% of selective schools nationally for high attainment. In addition, the School was able to show a positive impact in terms of the accountability measures relating to closing the gap, attainment (points score per entry), English and Maths, retention and destinations.

### **2016 examination results**

Initial analysis of the results released in August 2016 indicates that, once again, Reading School students have surpassed previous performances and have achieved a record set of GCSE examination results. Overall, 90.42% of entries were awarded A\*-A, with a record 60.28% achieving A\*. 95.2% of candidates achieved the English Baccalaureate. 100% of candidates gained 5 A\*-C grades, 95.2% gained 5 A\*-A grades and 59.7% gained 11 A\*/A grades. Twelve students gained 11 A\* grades. In Mathematics, 100% of grades gained were A\*-A, and 100% A\*-A grades were achieved in Drama, Music and Latin.

At AS level, 86.5% of all entries achieved A-B grades, the best performance since the introduction of AS examinations.

At A Level, 89.4% of entries achieved A\*-B, and 96.8% achieved A\*-C grades. 100% of students gained A\*-A grades in Art, English Literature, English Language and Literature, English Literature, Latin and History, and 79.2% of the 130 Mathematics students at A Level were graded A\*-A. 100% of French, German and Latin AS students gained A-B, breaking a national trend for the achievement of boys in languages.

### **3. ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2015/16**

The Governors have reviewed the performance of the academy trust and the School in 2015/16, and have highlighted significant progress and achievement during the year.

#### ***Curriculum and Standards:***

Work undertaken in the year included:

- Continuing to monitor the successful Link Governors Scheme where each Governor is linked to a curriculum or other area of the School. The links to curriculum areas have proved exceptionally useful, both in establishing closer ties between Governors and Staff, but also enabling the committee to be more knowledgeable about changes and challenges across the whole curriculum.
- Detailed preparation for changes to the curriculum at both GCSE and A-level, based to a review of whole of curriculum at Reading School in the light of the changes to GCSEs (with the focus on the English Baccalaureate), to the relationship between AS and A-levels, and to the OFSTED expectations on careers. A new timetable allocation has been agreed for introduction in 2016/17.
- Careful consideration of the impact of 6<sup>th</sup> form subject option choices made by students, with signs that efforts to retain a broad curriculum at this level are achieving some success (e.g. increased numbers opting for languages in 2016/17)
- In conjunction with the Admissions Committee, finalising plans to increase the entry to the School in Year 7 to 5 forms (150 pupils in total) from September 2016, which will both improve the School's financial position and assist in its plans to support social mobility by increasing scope to admit more pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Monitoring Quality Assurance and Self-Evaluation processes at departmental and school level improved to ensure 'Excellence' in teaching is achieved in all departments.
- The development of sustainable curriculum strategy for Ancient and Modern Languages at Reading School, based on a new combined department.
- Reviewing and further developing the School's international and local partnerships with other schools, including schools in India, China, Denmark and Kenya, and the successful Future Stories project in primary schools in Reading.

#### ***Admissions***

The Governing Body's Admissions Committee has carefully reviewed the School's admissions policies in the course of 2015/16. Given that the School is a selective school, and given its record of outstanding academic success, the School does not wish to change either the criteria for entry (based on performance in the admissions tests) or its current catchment area. However, the Governors wish to support social mobility, and to encourage more applications from and admissions of students from vulnerable and deprived backgrounds. To this end, the Committee has:

- Finalised arrangements to increase admissions in Year 7 to 5 forms of 30 students each from September 2016;
- Confirmed the proposals to abolish Year 9 admission to the School with effect from 2017/18,;
- Continued to support the Future Stories Community Project, working with primary schools (particularly within Reading Borough) which are in need of support to raise awareness of, and aspiration towards, the opportunities offered through application to Reading and Kendrick Schools.



**External Relations and Pastoral Care:**

Work undertaken in the year included:

- A very thorough review of the School's Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) provision.
- A review of student rewards and rewards policy
- A comprehensive safeguarding audit, and follow-up of findings
- Improving the School's approach to the active promotion of British Values and countering of violent extremism, anti-Semitism and radicalisation.
- A survey of parental views, and follow-up action on the issues which emerged.
- A staff welfare survey.
- Monitoring and reviewing co-curricular provision in the School, and seeking to maintain the optimum level of provision from the resources available.
- Continuing to monitor and improve boarding facilities.
- Taking a more organised and rigorous approach to governor training, and meeting the training and development needs of governors in the future, so as to ensure a good balance of skills and expertise within the Governing Body.
- Overseeing a Self Evaluation exercise of the Governing Body, and identifying ways of improving the effectiveness of governors' meetings, governors' relationships with staff, and governors themselves
- Continuing to operate and develop the arrangements whereby student representatives (the School Captain and Vice-Captains) regularly attend meetings of the Committee and have input to its work.

**Finance:**

Work undertaken in the year included:

- Successful completion of the 2014/2015 audited accounts, with an unqualified auditors' assessment.
- Careful monitoring of 2015/2016 income and expenditure, in a tight financial environment, and ensuring that targets were hit.
- Monitoring the School's financial control environment successfully, through Responsible Officer reports and a swift response to audit recommendations for minor improvement.
- Setting in train a rolling review of the School's risk register.
- Setting a budget for 2016/2017, in an extremely challenging financial climate in which the funding provided to the School is not keeping pace with rising costs; it has been necessary to set a deficit budget for 2016/17, but with a clear plan that additional income from higher pupil numbers in 2015/16 will improve the School's budget position in future years.
- Contributing to major capital projects from a finance perspective (Science Development etc.)
- Renewal of the School's audit and accounting contract in line with value-for-money principles, and extension of the current catering contract on the same principles
- Looking at the scope for improved fundraising arrangements for the School on behalf of the Governing Body, working in partnership with the Reading Foundation

**Property and Projects**

Achievements in 2015/16 included:

- Monitoring the construction of the new Science building, and working hard ensure that is completed as soon as possible after the start of the 2016/17 School year, notwithstanding the contractual problems which have arisen.
- Work on plans for a new Sports Hall to the point of submitting a planning application to the local authority (although this project has now been paused pending funding being identified – see Future Challenges below).
- The conversion of the former squash courts into a new fitness suite

- A successful bid for grant monies from the Education Funding Agency for undertaking refurbishment of the gymnasium and changing rooms.
- Careful monitoring and planning of the use of the property maintenance budget, and work with the Reading Foundation to ensure that maintenance priorities are identified systematically and tackled in the most cost-efficient manner.
- Review and updating of the School's development Master Plan to reflect current priorities.
- Repairs to school boundary walls and fences which are important in the safety/safeguarding context.
- Review and updating of Health and Safety policies, and the approval of a new Accessibility Plan.

On a less positive note, the School has had to accept that the age of much of the plant and health and safety considerations mean that the swimming pool has become uneconomic to maintain, and has agreed to its closure, although options for a new pool on the same site are under investigation.

### ***Boarding***

Boarding at the School has continued to improve in terms of both facilities and numbers, and there are now nearly 80 boarders. New facilities (such as the Medical Centre), better maintenance and security, and improved staffing arrangements have contributed to the success of Boarding.

### ***Development Fundraising***

Development Fundraising remained a high priority for the School in 2015/16. The primary emphasis has been on raising funds for the Science Project. Whilst this project secured ACMF funding, this did not cover its full costs, and the School required major fundraising to secure the funding for the parts of the project not covered by the ACMF grant, which amounted to more than £500,000.

The School has had some success, and has secured grants from the Wolfson Foundation and the Garfield Weston Foundation, as well as individual donations and pledges. However, this has not secured the full amount required for the project and the School has needed to use monies from other development funds to finance the project.

This has in turn led to the developments referred to under Finance above, with the scope for improved fundraising arrangements currently being examined, working in partnership with the Reading Foundation.

As noted above, the Sports Hall project has been paused at this stage, as there is no realistic prospect of raising the funds required in the immediate future.

On a more encouraging note, the School has secured a Condition Improvement Fund grant (which replaced ACMF grant funding in January 2015) for the refurbishment of the gymnasium and changing rooms, and has been able to fund the conversion of the former squash courts into a fitness suite.

The School gratefully acknowledges the financial support provided by the Reading Foundation towards a number of projects.

Donations and bequests have enabled the School to fund a rich programme of extra-curricular activities for students, and the Inspire Awards, which are designed to encourage staff to take on additional responsibilities to enrich the School's offering in specific areas of activity. The School is anxious to ensure that funding remains in place for these activities to continue.

### **Partnerships**

The development of partnerships at local, national and international level is fundamental to the future development of the School. The School has continued its involvement in successful partnerships in 2015/16:

- At local level through the Future Stories project (aimed at raising aspirations in Reading Primary Schools), the Reading First project and links with Reading University
- At national level through (amongst others) the Boys' Association of Selective Schools (BASS), the Boarding Schools Association (BSA) and the Grammar School Heads Association
- At international level through the International Boys' School Coalition, and partnerships with schools in Canada, Denmark, India, Australia and China

### **Sporting, musical, cultural and other achievements:**

As well as its academic excellence, the School is proud of its record in encouraging its students to achieve their potential in sport, music, cultural and other enrichment activities. Some of the highlights in 2015/16 were:

- A student was shortlisted for the CILIP Pupil Library Assistant of the Year Award 2016, an award run by the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals.
- Members of the School Robotics Club, aka Black Thunder, winning the Judges' Award as well as coming fifth overall in the National Final of the First Lego League Competition.
- The Senior Jazz Band winning the Chipping Norton Youth Jazz Band Challenge.
- The School winning 8 gold and 8 silver medals at the 2016 Biology Olympiad.
- A student winning an under 14 gold medal at the English Open Taekwondo Championships.
- The School breaking a world record when over 800 students gathered on the School field dressed as Harry Potter, raising over £800 for the Refugee Council's Syrian Refugee Appeal in the process.
- The Key Stage 3 team winning the National Final of the Schools Badminton Championships.
- Reading School's chess team winning the ECF National Schools U19 Chess Championship in Uppingham for the second time in 3 years, highlighting the remarkable talent for the game within the School.
- Victory in the regional Geographical Association quiz. 2015, which involved 23 teams from 11 different schools from Berkshire, Surrey and Hampshire.
- The annual Reading School inter-house music competition held at Reading Town Hall in November, where a packed house was treated to outstanding performances.
- The School's participation in the Public Speaking World Championships in Pittsburgh in April 2016

### **Conclusions**

The academic and other successes in 2015/16 show that Reading School continues to be one of the highest performing state schools in the country. We are pursuing our aim to develop it into a 'World Class School', which nurtures integrity and academic excellence through the development of leadership potential, and which measures up to international benchmarks.

We pride ourselves as an Academy on our commitment to sustain a high academic tradition and a willingness to embrace change in the interests of our students. We regularly attract over 700 applications for day places at the School at Year 7 and a further 30-40 for boarding places, also at Year 7. For 2017 entry, we received a total of 941 direct applications for day and boarding. The range of our feeder schools is diverse geographically. Our student population is ethnically and socially diverse with 54% of students coming from ethnic minorities. Most Year 13 leavers gain admission to leading Universities.

But, in our Strategic and Operational Plans, and in identifying the other challenges we face, we recognise that sustained success depends on continuous improvement, effective leadership, strong

partnerships and effective learning environments. Excellence in the classroom and development of the whole person in students is crucial.

We are committed to serving our local community and to playing a role in increasing social mobility, as demonstrated by our support for a Saturday morning school known as the Community Education Trust, the Gifted and Talented Academy for Year 5 and 6 pupils in local primary schools, and the Future Stories Project.

### **Key Performance indicators**

Academic performance and other achievements are covered in the Review of Achievement 2014/15 above.

Other performance data for 2015/16:

- Number of permanent exclusions: 0
- Number of fixed-term exclusions: 3
- Number of racist incidents: 3
- Number of incidents of bullying: 3
- Overall school attendance: 97.7%
- Pupil Lateness: 0.77%

Overall, these figures are very positive and trends from previous years are good, but a number of learning points have emerged from the extensive behaviour review undertaken this year, resulting in recommendations and action points, which the senior leadership team, working in partnership with staff, pupils, parents and governors, will implement.

## **4. FUTURE CHALLENGES**

The School's long-term strategy is currently set out in the Strategic Plan 2013-2018 which is available on the School's website. There is also a detailed Operational Plan for 2016/17, which was approved by the Governing Body on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2016, and is too detailed to set out in full here. The following summarises key elements of the latter:

### ***Academic Aims***

Reading School is outstandingly successful when measured by examination results and the successful placement of leaving students in their chosen universities and occupations. The Governing Body aims to maintain this success. Additionally the Governing Body aims to:

- Continue to drive up further student attainment, particularly at A-level. We aim for:
  - More than 90% of A-levels at grade A\* to B
  - More than 85% of GCSEs at grade A\* to A
  - Academic Departments to be ranked in the top 10 of Boys Academic Selective Schools in England at GCSE
- Embed the new Key Stage 3 and 4 and A-level curriculum models so that they are sustainable and challenging academically, enable choice and specialisation at the appropriate stages, particularly in the new 3-year Key Stage 4 and the 6<sup>th</sup> form.
- Embed the new Reading School Languages Strategy.
- Offer improved careers education.
- Improve the approach to promoting British Values and countering extremism, anti-Semitism and radicalisation.

- Continue to strengthen and develop Reading School's local, national and international strategic partnerships to benefit learning, and raise the understanding and appreciation of international culture and literature.
- Continue to develop a culture and ethos, philosophy and culture encompassing the academic, pastoral, spiritual and physical dimensions of our school, and review the spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision so that it maximises the potential of every Reading School student.
- Develop our capacity as a leading academic school to promote excellent approaches to teaching and learning, and develop strategies for ensuring excellence in the quality of teaching across all subject areas (including the use of technology to enhance teaching), with the target of Excellence in teaching over time in all departments
- Develop the role and skills of academic leadership in the School and build staff capacity to improve performance, as well as reviewing opportunities for staff development, reward and recognition.
- Good staff retention rates and recruitment and development of high quality staff, especially in the national shortage areas of Maths and Science.

### ***The breadth of the curriculum***

Maintaining the breadth of the School curriculum remains an important issue, and the School needs to build on the progress in 2015/16 by further promoting the English baccalaureate as part of the new 3-year Key Stage 4 curriculum to ensure a broad balanced curriculum offer with an emphasis on quality.

### ***Developing our students***

Developing the integrity and leadership capacity of our students remains a high priority, and there are plans to ensure that we develop and enhance pastoral roles and structures (e.g. the House System and prefects), the student rewards system, staff capacity and the opportunities inherent in out partnerships towards this end,

### ***Science facilities***

The school faced an immediate challenge at the start of 2016/17 of completing the new Science building, following the contractors going into administration. The position needed to be remedied as a matter of urgency, so that the new facilities were available for use by students.

### ***Sports facilities***

The Governing Body has agreed that, following completion of the Science Project, major improvements to the School's sports facilities are a high priority. Developing proposals and obtaining funding for these will demand the highest levels of effort and creativity. Whilst plans for a new Sports Hall have been drawn up, further progress has been stalled by issues over planning permission and funding. This means that the upgrading of existing facilities is urgent, and it is vital that:

- The School obtains maximum value from the new fitness suite;
- The improvements to the gym and changing rooms are completed as soon as possible;
- Any realistic opportunity to restore an on-site swimming pool is taken; and
- Governors and staff work together, with support from parents, to identify other affordable improvements.

### ***The strategic future of the School***

Governors are very alert to the changing landscape of state education policy and structures in England, and, in particular, the changes proposed in the Education White Paper earlier in 2016. Governors are anxious that the School plays an active role in the proposed changes, and, just as important, that the School remains in control of its destiny, and is fully able to retain its current

ethos and standards. To this end a governor working party has been reviewing the School's strategic options, including such issues as possible Multi Academy Trust status and more formal partnerships. This working party will report back to the Governing Body and the Trust in 2016/17, so that the School can begin developing and implementing a strategy to secure the most beneficial outcomes. However, this will not be easy against a background where several key elements of government policy on schools and education remain less than clear.

### ***Admissions and social mobility***

The increase in the number of Year 7 admissions in September 2016 to 150, will help us create further opportunities to support social mobility by admitting more students from vulnerable and disadvantaged backgrounds, and we will continue to do so by reviewing admissions arrangements (with no compromising of academic standards) and building on the success of the Future Stories project.

### ***Fundraising***

The funding requirements for Science and Sport, alongside other demands such as the Inspire awards and the extra-curricular programme, will mean that fundraising will be more important than ever. Efforts will need to be made to ensure that the energies of staff and governors are channeled in the most productive manner, and, in particular, to implement successfully new fundraising arrangements in partnership with the Reading Foundation and to develop and broaden the involvement in the School of alumni, working in partnership with the Old Redingensians Association.

### ***Other challenges:***

- Sustaining the current successes in boarding, with a minimum 75 boarders on the roll in September 2017.
- Developing our own skills and effectiveness as governors so that the ethos of Excellence, Integrity and Leadership is strengthened in the School.
- Completing the continuing programme of high priority repair and refurbishment projects, working in partnership with the Reading Foundation.

### ***Principal Risks and Uncertainties***

The School has an excellent record in meeting its challenges, and the Governors recognise the key role of talented and dedicated staff in this – the effort devoted to the construction of, and funding for, the Science Project provides a good illustration.

The School's high standards, its excellent record and its popularity with potential applicants, mean that the main risks are financial in nature. Currently, the principal risks and uncertainties are:

- Major efforts have been made to bridge the funding gap caused by reductions to revenue funding. Revenue expenditure has been progressively reduced to the minimum level compatible with sustaining academic standards and meeting all the ambitions set out in the Strategic and Annual plans.
- Given this position, and the fact that there are elements of costs which the School cannot control (e.g. pension contributions), it is vital that the School increases its level of income in future years. The main means of doing so is through increased pupil numbers, and the School has already increased student numbers in the 6<sup>th</sup> Form, and will increase admissions in Year 7 from September 2016.
- A related issue is that the School's funding position is such that subjects which few students opt for, particularly at A-levels, cannot be offered economically. This poses a potential threat to the breadth of the curriculum, but the signs in 2015/16 were encouraging, particularly in respect of the numbers of students opting for languages. Governors will

continue to monitor the position, and the 2016/17 Operational Plan sets out action aimed at sustaining curriculum breadth

- The need to manage and control the financial risks associated with major projects, such as the Science Project, and particularly the need to be able to raise additional funds at local level to support such projects. The position on fundraising and the use of funds raised is regularly and closely monitored by governors in Committee meetings.
- In this context, there is still a pressing need to generate development funding for sports facilities, co-curricular activities etc, with a need to ensure that School and the Reading Foundation are firmly focussed on new and existing fundraising options. New protocols and responsibilities for fundraising are currently being developed.
- Given the nature of the School site and buildings, the risk of unforeseen and expensive repair work is substantial and can lead to urgent funding needs, as recent experience shows. The Governing Body is seeking to reduce this risk by identifying the highest priorities and tackling them pro-actively, so as to minimise the extent of unexpected problems – in this context, Governors acknowledge the contributions made by the Reading Foundation.

## 5. FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

### Financial performance in 2015/16

Most of the Academy's income comes from the Education Funding Agency (EFA), in the form of recurrent grants for particular purposes. These grants and the associated expenditure are shown as restricted funds in the Statement of Financial Activities. In 2015/16 Reading School received the following grants:

General Annual Grant:	£4,376,110
Devolved Formula Capital Grant:	£ 22,770
Academies Annual Maintenance Fund Grant:	£1,107,320
Condition Improvement Fund Grant	£ 158,522
Pupil Premium Funding:	£ 11,038

For accounting purposes the Boarding department is fully integrated within the Academy Financial Statements whereas at operational level Boarding is run entirely separately from the School.

As at 31 August 2015 the net book value of fixed assets was £ 12,272,335. The School's operating surplus for 2014/15 was £1,688,197 (Note: this figure included an Academies Annual Maintenance Fund Grant for the Science Project of £1,646,108, held in readiness to fund building work in 2015/16.) (The equivalent figures for 2015/16 will be published in the Annual Report and Financial Statement for 2015/16)

### Reserves Policy

The Governors' policy is to generate reserves to provide funds to continue to enhance the educational and boarding facilities and to fund future development projects. The Governors review the reserves policy annually to ensure this aim can be achieved.

At the end of 2014/15 the balance sheet showed that the Academy Trust had free reserves of £501,963. (The equivalent figures for 2014/15 will be published in the Annual Report and Financial Statement for 2013/14)

### Investments Policy

The Academy Trust's current policy is to invest surplus funds in short term cash deposits. At present available deposit rates are minimal so the Trust's cash balances generated interest of £ 4,297 during 2015/16.

**Funds held as custodian**

Reading School holds funds as agent on behalf of parents in relation to the running of educational visits and on behalf of staff as custodian of the Common Room Fund. Educational visits are run on a non-profit basis with material surpluses being refunded to parents on completion of the visit.

*This report was prepared on behalf of the Governing Body of Reading School by the Clerk to Governors, Mr Steve Vale.*