



Reading School Academy Trust

Governors' Annual Report to Parents – 2012/13

October 2013

This is the first 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 be the first of regular Annual Reports to parents.

Since this is the first report of this type, it sets out some background information on the Academy Trust and the Governing Body, as well as reporting on achievements and events in the 2012/13 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.

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 (the School’s landlord)

10 governors appointed by the Academy Trust

The Headmaster as an *ex officio* member

All Governors are appointed for a period of four years. (Note: The Governors in post at the time of conversion to Academy status were appointed to the Governing Body of the Academy School to continue to serve until their date of retirement as determined by the predecessor (non-Academy) School. At the end of their initial term of service, all Governors are eligible for re-appointment (or re-election as parent governors if they have a student at the School).

Staff vacancies on the Governing Body are filled by election, the electorate comprising all teaching and associate staff. A new staff governor is due to be elected at the start of the 2013/14 year, following the resignation of Mr Gary Beahan.

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 notification of vacancies and invitation of nominations. All parents and carers of students at the School are eligible to stand and the electorate comprises all parents and carers. Three places were filled by election in December 2012, and a further place will fall vacant in December 2013, so that a further election will be held.

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 reviewing the mix of skills that should be available to the Governing Body. Vacancies are advertised in the local press. Potential new Governors are required to submit a letter of interest and CV and are interviewed by the Chair of Governors, the Headmaster and one other Governor, before a recommendation for appointment is presented to a meeting of the Academy Trust. Two new appointments were made in 2012/13 – Dr Ranjit Manghnani and Mrs Angela Kay.

New Governors receive information packs and meet the Chair of Governors to discuss the role of a Governor and the requirements of Reading School and to undertake a site visit. All new Governors receive induction training from the Chair and Clerk and from external agencies.

In addition there are periodic reviews of training requirements and opportunities for all governors. A refresher training session for all members of the Governing Body was held in January 2013. Governors also participate in local networks, coordinated by the local authority.

The current Governing Body

The School currently has a full complement of 19 governors. They are:

READING SCHOOL GOVERNORS	J Bannister *	(elected 1 December 2012)
	G Beahan +	(resigned 31 st August 2013)
	S Bowen	
	A P Brown	
	R Childs *	
§ Governor appointed by the Reading Foundation	D R Fisher *	(re-elected 1 December 2012)
	R P Huggins §	
	D A Jubb	
* Elected parent governor	A K Kay	(appointed 1 December 2013)
	R J Kenwick	(re-appointed 1 December 2012)
+ Elected staff governor	R Manghnani	(appointed 1 September 2012)
	A M Materlik +	(appointed 1 September 2012)
# Headmaster and <i>ex officio</i> governor	P C H Mitchell	
	I L Martin §	
	S Nortcliff	
	M L Parsons	
	A M Robson #	(appointed 1 September 2012)
	M. Stock *	(elected 1 December 2012)
	C Toms	

The Chair of Governors is Dr Philip Mitchell and the Vice Chair is Mr Ian Martin. The Clerk to Governors is Mr Steve Vale. Details of each Governor’s background and areas of interest are available on the School’s website:

www.reading-school.co.uk

How do the Governors operate?

The Governing Body meets six times each year, including an Annual General meeting in October. 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 are four committees:

- Curriculum
- External Relations and Pastoral Care
- Finance
- Property

Additionally, a committee, designated the Chairs Group, comprising the Chair of Governors, the Vice Chair, the Chairs of the above four committees and the Headmaster meets at least termly, and as required, to organise business, make recommendations to the Governing Body and to consider personnel matters.

Governors' committees are established *ad hoc* 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. These currently include:

- the Development Board, which is responsible for raising funds to provide benefits to Reading School for which there is no provision made through public funding, including the improvement of facilities, educational and enrichment opportunities, and other projects that will advance the work of the School.
- the Financial Strategies Working Group, which is a combined governor/staff committee looking at plans to achieve best value from expenditure and increased income, in the face of anticipated funding reductions for the sixth form

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 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 Away Day is kept and fed into the work of the committees and the Governing Body. The last such Away Day was held on 29th June 2013, and the outcomes of the day are reflected in this report.

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, visit departments, sit in on classes and report back to the relevant Committees on the outcomes. Other link governors assume responsibility in particular areas of School life, for example health and safety, special educational needs, information technology, the CCF, facilities management, sporting activities and boarding. Considerable efforts have been made to re-invigorate the link governor system in 2012/13, as part of efforts to enhance staff/governor relationships and to enable governors to be better informed of the 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 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 results, 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. Mr Steve Vale was appointed as Clerk with effect from 1 September 2012.

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 also 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 2012/13

The record of attendance by governors at meetings in 2012/13 is set out in the table below:

Governor	Meetings attended	Out of possible
J Bannister	6	7
G Beahan	12	15
S Bowen	13	14
A P Brown	13	16
R Childs	11	16
D R Fisher	14	15
R P Huggins	6	10
D A Jubb	16	16
A Kay	6	6
R J Kenwrick	10	14
A Manghnani	7	11
I L Martin	9	10
A Materlik	13	15
P C H Mitchell	22	25
S Nortcliff	14	15
M L Parsons	12	14
A Robson	22	25
M Stock	6	6
C Toms	9	10

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 1st July 2013, together with a series of annual Operational Plans (the Operational Plan for 2013/14 was also approved by the Governing Body on 1st July 2013).

These plans were adopted by the Governing Body in July 2013, and all committees viewed and discussed them in advance of adoption. 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 School also adopted a new teaching and learning framework in early 2013, designed to underpin all teaching and learning in the School and to create a culture that systematically cultivates habits and attitudes that enable students to face challenges in their learning with confidence, including effective feedback and outstanding teaching.

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 Committees;
- The Curriculum 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 policies are reviewed at appropriate intervals, in accordance with a schedule agreed by Governing Body, including consideration of their value and effectiveness in delivering the aims of the Academy

Relationships with other bodies

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”.

Up until July 2013, the Foundation held the all the funds which had been raised to provide benefits to Reading School for which there is no provision made through public funding. A number of these have recently been transferred to the direct control of the Academy, and their management and use is now the responsibility of the Governing Body, and is monitored by the Finance Committee. The Headmaster is a trustee of The Reading Foundation.

The Governing Body is affiliated to the National Governors’ Association, and has a contract with Reading Borough Council for governor services, which covers training, procedural and legal advice, and good practice matters.

2. ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2012/13

Academic performance

Reading School continues to excel in terms of the academic results achieved by its students. In 2012 the School was ranked eighth in the National League tables at A level for all state Schools.

At A-level in 2012, 98.6 % of students were awarded grades A* to C across all examinations taken, and 93% of A2 examinations undertaken by Year 13 students were awarded A*-B grades. Performance was particularly strong in mathematics and economics.

At GCSE in 2012, students were awarded grades A- C in 99.2% of all examinations undertaken, and 91.2% of pupils achieved 5 or more GCSEs (including English and Maths) at grade A or A*. This represented a slight improvement on 2011. There were particularly strong performances in Biology, Chemistry, Geography, Latin and Mathematics.

Early indications of results in 2013 are encouraging, particularly at GCSE. At A-level, 96.8% of entries achieved grade A* to C, 91.8% gaining A* to B, and 70.9% A* to A. At GCSE, the school achieved its best ever results at GCSE, with 85% of entries across all subjects awarded A* to A. 100% of the School’s 124 GCSE candidates attained five A* to C grades; 91.9% achieved 5 A* to A and 39.5% succeeded in getting 11 A* to A grades.

Notwithstanding these achievements, the School has identified areas for improvement, and is working hard to improve outcomes in Technology, Business Studies, German and English Literature.

Review of achievements in 2012/13

The Governors have reviewed the performance of the Academy Trust and the School in 2012/13, and have highlighted significant progress and achievements during the year:

Curriculum

The link governor system has been re-invigorated, with a programme of regular visits to School departments, with the outcomes reported back to the Governing Body via the Curriculum Committee.

A new teaching and learning framework was agreed (see under **Indicators, Milestones & Benchmarks** above)

The School has continued to perform at a level which is significantly above average in terms of value added (as measured by the DfE) between Key Stages 2 and 4.

Restructurings of the English and former Technology (now Computer Science and Engineering) departments have been successfully completed, along with the introduction of the IGCSE in German

More rigorous benchmarking with other Schools has begun, as a further means of ensuring that weaknesses and challenges in academic performance are addressed

External Relations and Pastoral Care

The governors have adopted a statement of current actions which support the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of students at Reading School. It will continue to work on key aspects of how the School seeks to communicate values to its students, aiming to be explicit in conveying values that are positive, but at the same time inclusive.

All key policies are up to date and appropriate, with systematic reviews of their operation and effectiveness.

Efforts to improve staff/governor relations have improved, evidenced in a recent staff survey, and governors are increasingly engaged in School activities and events.

The School website has been improved, with better information about governors and their roles, skills and interests

A review of the School’s Special Educational Needs provision has shown high standards and successful outcomes for students.

Finance

There has been continuous improvement in financial administration compliance and control, with more effective use of the Responsible Officer role to follow up on audit findings.

Significant savings have been or are likely to be achieved in staffing costs and overheads such as cleaning and insurance.

Charitable and development funds have been successfully transferred from the Reading Foundation to the School.

Building and Repair projects

The new School dining hall, known as the Refectory, was completed in April 2012, and has proved a great success, providing a much needed centre for the informal social life of the School for staff, students, parents, Governors and visitors. It is also available for local community use.

In 2012/13, the following repair and renewal work has been undertaken:

- Installation of lights on the School driveway
- Further refurbishment of the boarding facilities, in accordance with the Boarding Development Strategy approved in 2012
- Treatment of a major dry rot outbreak
- Asbestos removal works

- Heating system - boiler and pump replacements
- Replacement of the School Fire Alarm system
- Roof repairs
- Replacement of trees on the School terrace.
- Removal of dangerous trees at Morgan Road.

The fire alarm replacement was funded by a successful bid for a grant from the Education Funding Agency, and the Reading Foundation has helped to fund a number of these projects. The Old Redingensians have also provided funds.

The School has also been successful in winning an Education Funding Agency grant for a major project to refurbish its Computer Science facilities, following on from a review of the old Technology department, which has now been re-designated Computer Science and Engineering.

This grant has been supplemented with further funding from donors and bequests, and a major project commenced in the summer of 2013 which will continue into 2013/14 and will provide for:

- The refurbishment of the Technology Suite (Page Building) to create 2 new laboratories
- The conversion of the Workshop to create a further 2 laboratories
- The refurbishment of the Lecture Theatre
- The refurbishment of a laboratory (C3) in Chemistry
- Ground works and an additional play area adjacent to the former Workshop

The School cleaning contract was retendered in early 2013, with a reduction in costs for no diminution of service standards

Development Fundraising

The School’s fundraising campaign, led by the Development Board and supported by its Development Director (a post which is itself funded by the campaign) continues and has met with considerable success in the academic year 2012-13.

In the course of the year, the campaign has succeeded in generating major funding for the Computer Science development project from the Education Funding Agency and from a major donor (the Thomason fund).

It has also clarified its future long-term focus on generating funding for sports and science facilities, at the same time recognising the need to allocate smaller funds to shorter-term projects with immediate beneficial impact. The transfer of development funds from the Reading Foundation to the School is designed to encourage a more dynamic relationship between development opportunities and the provision of funding.

Donations and bequests have also funded the provision of Leadership development programmes, with the introduction of 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.

Partnerships

The School’s partnerships with schools in China and in European settings continue to develop and prosper. The School has now signed memorandum of understanding with Shanghai High School, following a visit to the School by Reading School staff. It has also participated in an exchange project with its Comenius partners in Denmark this year, with students and teachers benefitting from the opportunity to learn from different practices in assessment in European school settings.

It has also established a link with a school in Kenya, via Touraid, which would result in 12 Kenyan boys being sponsored to come to Reading in 2014.

The new Leadership Team

Following the appointments of Ashley Robson to the post of Headmaster and of Anne Hardwick as acting Deputy Headteacher from September 2012, the current temporary arrangements for the Leadership Team are working well. The governors have agreed to extend these until the start of the 2014/15 academic year, which will give more time for the Headmaster to review the leadership structure of the School and devise the best longer-term arrangement.

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 extra-curricular activities. These activities are numerous and extensive; some of the highlights in 2012/13 were:

- In February, over 100 Year 7 musicians participated in a concert to a packed audience in Big School, where ‘the joy of music reigned.’ This was an important initiative to encourage wider participation in playing music led by the School’s Director of Music.
- In April, the senior jazz band won through to the National Music for Youth Festival.
- A joint concert with Kendrick School in April raised money for the Air Ambulance.
- A year 8 student was the successful recipient of the UK Children’s Fine Art Competition National Award in February,
- The Reading School chess team once again reached the national finals, and a Year 8 student, finished fifth in the Under 12 section of the World Youth Chess Championships.
- The Year 7 (U12) Football team are the County Champions
- The Under 13 Cricket team were crowned County Champions following their victory over Langley Grammar School in the final.
- A Year 13 student successfully competed for England in an International Association of Athletics Federations Cross Country Permit Race in Burgos, Spain in November. He came fourth in the men’s junior race and was the first English runner home.
- Two students were the UK’s representatives in the World Individual Public Speaking and Debating competition held in Durban, South Africa. As a result of their success, the School has been invited to send a team to the 2014 World Championships held in Lithuania.
- A Year 10 student was selected to participate in an elite Mathematics Summer School in Oxford in August. The aim of the Summer School is to train talented Mathematicians who have the potential to represent the United Kingdom on the World Stage at International Mathematics Olympiad.
- A Year 13 student received an award to acknowledge his outstanding performance, achieving one of the highest marks in a new competition called the Cambridge Chemistry Challenge, which was taken by 4300 students in 300 Schools across the country this year. He was amongst 39 students who achieved the highest marks in the Challenge.
- The School was the UK representative at the National Geographic World Championships, held in St Petersburg.
- Students from Reading School won gold medals in the Biology Olympiads.

3. FUTURE CHALLENGES

Reading School continues to be one of the highest performing state Schools in the country. We aim to develop it into ‘World Class School’, which nurtures integrity and academic excellence through the development of leadership potential, and which measures up well 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 600 applications for day places at the School at Year 7 and a further 30-40 for boarding places, also at Year 7.

But, in our Strategic and Operational Plans, and in identifying the other challenges we face, we recognise that sustained success will depend on continuous improvement, effective leadership, strong partnerships and effective learning environments. Excellence in the classroom and development of the whole person in students will be crucial.

We are committed to serving our local community and this is demonstrated by our support for a Saturday morning School known as the Community Education Trust and the running of a Gifted and Talented Academy for Year 5 and 6 pupils in local primary Schools. The range of our feeder Schools is diverse geographically. Our student population is ethnically and socially diverse with 26% of students coming from ethnic minorities. Most Year 13 leavers gain admission to leading Universities.

The Governing Body and the Headmaster have identified the following priorities for the School and the Academy Trust in the coming year:

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 address the needs, academic and pastoral, of students, and in particular, seek to improve the value added for those students who do not perform at the highest level, and reduce the extent of in-School variations in performance.
- Make the best use of the Pupil Premium to address the achievement gap of vulnerable students
- Ensure that all governors are regularly updated on performance against Key Performance Indicators, and appoint a link governor with special responsibility for monitoring performance against the RAISEonline measures established by the DfE.
- Improve the evaluation of the quality of teaching in the School, with feedback sought from the students
- Improve English and German results at GCSE
- Review the educational benefit and cost effectiveness of subjects attracting low numbers and to develop collaborations with other Schools to ensure the preservation of such subjects.
- Continue to expand sixth form entry of qualified students
- Strike the best balance of retaining the maximum extent of subject option choices in the face of financial constraints

Future development in Science and Sport

The governors have agreed that the School’s major priorities for future development are science and sports facilities, whilst acknowledging that it will need to raise substantial funds in order to proceed with the large-scale works which are needed.

The Computer Science development project is a significant start on improving science facilities, but the School will aim to create detailed plans for improvements to its other science facilities, and identify the funding for them, in 2013/14.

A working party has been set up to work on plans for the upgrading of sports facilities, and this will continue to work on proposed improvements and new facilities in 2013/14, and on identifying funding requirements.

The Governors recognise that the levels of expenditure required in these areas are unlikely to be available from public funding, and that major fundraising efforts will be required from within the School, whilst still taking any opportunities to secure any grant monies available from the government.

Depending on the success of fundraising efforts, it may be necessary to prioritise works within science support to ensure that the maximum benefit is derived at the earliest stage.

Other challenges

The successful delivery of the Computer Science development project is a key priority.

Further improvements are needed in parent/governor relations, with improved mechanisms for capturing parents’ views

There is a major challenge in the reduction in 6th form funding in the next few years, and a need to develop a long-term funding strategy in the face of the difficulties posed by government policy changes.

We need better feedback mechanisms on the impact of policies approved by the Governing Body – for example, those on student behaviour and bullying.

The Governing Body will review its own operation and structures in 2013/14 to ensure that it is working effectively in providing strategic leadership, and that any barriers to governor effectiveness in supporting excellence are removed.

4. FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

Financial performance in 2012/13

Most of the Academy’s income comes from the Education Funding Agency (EFA), formerly the YPLA 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 2012/13 Reading School received grants of:

- £34,000 towards the replacement of the School fire alarm; and
- £260,000 towards the Computer Science Development Project

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 2013 the net book value of fixed assets was £ 11,142,646.

The School’s operating surplus for 2011/12 was £ 789,607. (The equivalent figure for 2012/13 will be published in the Annual Report and Financial Statement for 2012/13)

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 2011/12 the balance sheet showed that the Academy Trust had free reserves of £ 242,411, of which £ 92,787 related to the Boarding Department. (The equivalent figures for 2012/13 will be published in the Annual Report and Financial Statement for 2012/13)

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 £1,593 during 2012/13.

The academy plans to review its investment policies in 2013/14, following the transfer of development funds to its control from the Reading Foundation.

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.

Dr Philip Mitchell, Chair of Governors