

Annual Report from Braunton Academy Chair of Governors 2018-19



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As Chair of Governors for Braunton Academy, I have pleasure in submitting this report to the Trust. This report covers the significant milestones, achievements and concerns for the academic year 2018-19.

1. Context

This has been a difficult year for the Academy: in tragic circumstances, we lost a Year 11 student, within hours of the joy that was the '2019 Prom', and an ex-student within the space of a few days. These events sadly highlight the truth that schools are not only places of learning but an institution that carries with it a narrative far wider than just education - with students bringing a whole welter of emotions into class every day, schools have to be highly flexible in providing students with a safe haven, supported by adults who provide a balance of care and protection in a chaotic world. This, at a time when many face the turmoil of adolescence, of course. I have to say that our Academy repeatedly responds magnificently to the additional demands placed upon it - and continues to provide the highest quality of pastoral care to its young people, even at a time when funding for 'wellbeing' activities are being reduced.

The Academy continues to present itself as a confident place of learning - with clarity around expectations and pedagogy (Trivium). Occasionally, sadly on a regular basis, the staff face challenge from parents who find it difficult to provide a consistent message around acceptable behaviour and the meeting of expectations: the Academy does much to show where the 'line in the sand' needs to be drawn, ensuring the students always receive the moral guidance required for a productive quality of life from those who teach them. Governors will always support the Academy in ensuring that standards of conduct and behaviour are maintained.

The school remains popular - with a number of Year groups 'over' the PAN (Pupil Admission Number) of 150/155:

Yr 7 - 152 (waiting list 28), Yr 8 - 151 (3), Yr 9 - 147, Yr 10 - 155 and Yr 11 - 135 (last year 130).

Interest in attending the Academy remains high in non-catchment areas.

2. Academic Attainment

It remains difficult to comment too scientifically on the 'moving feast' that is 'academic outcomes'. However, the Yr 11 leavers (2019), as anticipated, did not perform as well on progress measures as the previous year. (P8 -0.37 compared to -0.21 (2018)). However, it is important to note that overall attainment was improved (A8 47.05 compared to 46.00 (2018)). Of particular concern, is the performance of 'Disadvantaged pupils', while relatively small in number, they have a significant impact on overall school performance.

Whilst not being overly complacent, our results are similar to other coastal schools in Devon and as such Governors and Trustees, we endorse many of the key messages contained in the House of Lords report on Coastal Communities.

Mick Cammack and his team have carried out a forensic examination of this year's results (see his paper *'The Myriad of Influencers on the 'Class of 2019'* or subtitled *'Education is a messy business'*). Issues raised include the gender imbalance (56% to 44% boys/girls), high but unsubstantiated APS at KS2, issues over mental health and drugs issues in a number of youngsters (8%), lack of parental

engagement within some families. It is anticipated that next year's results (both progress and attainment) will show an improvement.

Attendance remains significantly above local and national averages (96.45%) and 3rd measured against other Devon Secondary Schools.

3. Development Planning for Progress on Key Priorities (2019-2020).

The Academy Development Plan is in the second year of its cycle with x3 main priorities which emerge from the schools (and department) evaluation process:-

- a. To further develop and embed metacognition and self-regulated learning across the Academy.
- b. To close the gap between disadvantaged pupils (particularly Pupil Premium students) and other students.
- c. To further develop students' character (Character Matters).

Governors hold the Academy to account through regular challenge within portfolio meetings, where central to our work is feedback on development plan activities (RAG rated).

4. Governance

Governors continue to work within the four main portfolio groups (Leadership and Management, Safeguarding and Behaviour, Teaching and Learning and Finance and Estate) reviewing the work of the Academy. This involves meeting with students and Academy leaders and questioning them on their work within each of the Portfolio groups' remits. The information from the Portfolio groups, along with the Principal's report (a termly update on where the school is measured against OFSTED judgements) ensures all aspects of the Academy's work is covered and scrutinised. Governors also employ a School Improvement Partner to give an external view of the Academy and support the governors with the Principal's Performance Review).

Over the last academic year much work has gone on with other schools within the Braunton Learning Community: Governors from all six schools agreed to research ways of formulating a stronger grouping which would be mutually supportive of work around school improvement. The outcome has been the formation of the Braunton Co-operative Trust - all schools have signed up to this new structure, with Braunton Academy being invited to be a Partner School with equal status as the others schools. As a previously existing standalone Academy, we could not become a new foundation school within the trust as we were already one!! Over the coming year, we look forward to being able to report on the further enhancement of partnership arrangements within the old Braunton Learning Community.

Suffice to say - governance remains strong, able to support and challenge the school in its practices and outcomes. This year, with a small turnover of Governors, we are seeking to welcome new governors who will bring a wide range of expertise from within our community.

5. Finance

The financial position of the school, as at 31st August 2019, is projected to be better than planned, helped by the additional ESFA income for Capital ('Little Extras') and Teacher Pay Grant, which had not been budgeted. Costs have been well controlled, with no unexpected expenditure incurred. With the 'Little Extra' grant enabling the Academy to improve the Site Security and invest in much needed equipment.

Overall the Academy is projected to have an increase in both Restricted and Unrestricted reserves at the year end.

With the retirement of the Academy's Internal Auditor, Griffin Accountancy were appointed, who are very experienced in providing excellent internal scrutiny.

6. Going Forward.

The Academy has many reasons to be confident about its future. I give just a flavour of some of the work going on in the school which will have an impact in improving the learning and opportunities of the young people and the families we serve.

- a. Clarity around pedagogy and expectations - through the work on self-regulated learning and metacognition, the embedding of the Trivium as the Academy's pedagogical model, and the consolidation of the teaching and learning programmes across all departments inline with the Ofsted definition of the curriculum (the 3 x i's - Intent, Implementation And Impact).
- b. Continued refinement of the Assessment and Reporting processes within the school, to meet the need of all of our learners and stakeholders.
- c. Establishing the new roles of Raising Standards Leaders at both KS3 and KS4 and a new Pupil Premium Champion, along with embedding the Heads of Year and tutoring roles.
- d. A promised uplift in school finance as announced by the new Prime Minister (over and above salary and pension costs).
- e. Continued development of student care provision - House Co-Ordinator, Attendance Officer, Learning Mentors along with the development of the MYRIAD (mindfulness) project.
- f. In place the e version of the staff handbook along with the growing importance of 'class charts'.

Over the next year, the Academy intends to play a greater role in increasing local social mobility by improving individual and group access to enhanced skills and qualifications; to develop more resilient learners who are able to overcome challenges as they arrive; create a broader exposure to the wider curriculum within sport, the arts and film. And if that was not enough - to build confident individuals ready for the ever-changing adult world.

Again, we are indebted to all who work in the Academy under the stewardship of Mick and his leadership team. As trustees we have so much of which we should be proud as we continue to work with the Academy on its journey towards 'Outstanding'.

Mark Juby
Chair of Governors and Trustees
to Braunton Academy
September 2019