

FORUM OF INDEPENDENT DAY SCHOOLS

SECRETARY'S REPORT 2012-13

This has been a busy but productive year. My main job has centred around helping plan the new direction – new members, PR development with RSA, website and identifying the main areas of focus.

These areas are now beginning to come together. We have acquired 10 new members, and I am particularly pleased that more girls' schools are coming on board – though there is still work to do, and I hope to be able to be in more regular contact once we have the website and PR part finally set up. We aim to achieve 100 schools by the end of next year, and that is still the focus, although we are aware that people need to see progress in our activities and public persona.

The former is being driven by our three projects, two of which are definitely progressing – the Primary Schools Partnership scheme and the Social Mobility questionnaire. The first scheme involves us actively working in our communities and with the educational establishment to raise educational standards, particularly with the most able pupils. The second project is to flesh up our claim that we are actively helping social mobility – and are the pre-eminent schools in the country to be able to do this.

Much of our work is not noticed, so we do have to be much more proactive in PR if we wish to do this; hence, the work with RS Academics and the website. Much also depends on regularly visiting the politicians and educational establishment – this has been a major feature this year. Whether the third scheme - for supporting teaching and learning in STEM subjects in Years 10 and 11 in state schools – will get off the ground is another matter since ultimately involves money following pupils into our sixth forms, but we shall pursue it. The attendance of two senior HMIs from OFSTED at our conference is encouraging, and a sign of possible engagement.

A mid-term focus is preparing the ground and the issues for the politicians for the election of 2015. In this regard we shall need the vocal and active support of as many members as possible.

The new arrangement of an annual chairman has worked well, and I would like to thank Julian for his tremendous support and involvement this year. Many thanks also to Nick Hammond for guiding us through the first year of Company Accounts as a Limited Company!

We are losing three stalwarts from the Committee as they move on, so are looking for some extra members who will be active in recruiting and pushing forward the issues. Our use of Conference Calls instead has greatly helped the efficiency and involvement of the Committee.

Stephen Smith May 2013