

# Woodard Voice

Issue 3 January 2015



Woodard Voice is aimed at spreading news about activity and developments across our range of schools. Issue 3 takes a closer look at how the strategy of Woodard Schools is to be developed over the coming years, following a period of consultation and evidence gathering. The strategy has been discussed at the Custodes Council and the Heads' Conference, and has been adopted by the Woodard Board. Further detailed work is still to be done, but we hope readers will be excited about the direction of travel.

## A New Year message from the Chairman

Once again we have heard the Christmas message and celebrated the birth of our Saviour, and we have marked the turning of the year. The Christmas tree is on the bonfire and the decorations stowed away until next year. We look forward to a year full of hope and excitement, marked with memorable centenaries, such as those of Magna Carta and the battle of Waterloo, and milestones, as Queen Elizabeth becomes our longest reigning monarch, as well as a wholly unpredictable General Election.

Within Woodard in 2014 we have again run a full programme of Conferences for Chairmen, Heads, Chaplains and Bursars. Each one I have attended seemed better than its predecessor and the feedback from delegates has been very encouraging. At the Chairmen's Conference last November we brought together Chairmen from Woodard Schools in both maintained and private sectors. Many of the governance issues faced by Chairmen are similar and the debate and discussion, facilitated by Mike Hudson of the Compass Partnership, provided some very helpful information and reminders.

We have made great progress with consultations over our new strategy which is now ready to be launched, and on the following pages you will see the key points. It has been a great joy to experience the way in which so many people throughout Woodard schools have participated actively in the process. We have seen and felt a new level of engagement, and widespread recognition that together we can achieve far more than even the best of our schools can ever achieve alone.

We move into 2015 with great confidence that we are on a course which will enable all our schools to raise their performance even higher. Our hope is to see an increased level of collaboration between our schools and across both sectors, which will begin to enable Woodard to find its voice within British Education for the benefit of its professional staff and ultimately, of course, its pupils.

Best wishes to you all for a happy and successful year.

**Tom Fremantle**  
*Chairman*



# Woodard Review and Strategic Plan 2015



## Woodard strategy

A number of principles informed our review and strategic plan:

- A strategy for the Woodard Corporation (not individual schools).
- A strategy that assumes active consultation with our schools, both in its design and implementation.
- A strategy that does not entail Woodard managing from the centre, but facilitates schools fulfilling their ambitions.
- A strategy that delivers current expectations of Woodard and builds on them.
- A focus on improving quality rather than growing the number of schools; we need to improve quality throughout our family.
- A strategy that is based upon the principles of partnership working – both internally and externally.

## What did the research tell us?

*Woodard Voice Issue 1 (February 2014)* contained the key findings from the educational research we commissioned. This research acted as the foundation for our strategic review which would position Woodard to provide the structure, framework and support facilities to allow consistent delivery of our charitable object into the future.

The research concluded that the educational landscape has changed dramatically in the past few years. Whilst the proportion of students in independent versus maintained schools, as well as the proportion of schools, has remained relatively unchanged over the last 20 years, the market has become increasingly diverse. A regional view highlights challenges outside of London and the South East. There has been a significant increase in international students in boarding schools and a move towards co-ed schools. In the state sector, changes driven by central government's commitment to raising standards are based upon a free market principle of competition, diversity of provision and the development of a significant role for commercial providers of education through sponsorship of academies and free schools. Traditional partnerships are changing and developing, and schools need to be increasingly entrepreneurial and creative in engaging with new strategic partners, both within the UK and abroad. Within this market opportunities exist for Woodard schools to develop strategic partnerships and collaborate not only within the family but with external schools and providers while preserving their distinctive character.

Woodard's strategy involves grasping the opportunities afforded by such significant changes with confidence. It provides a framework within which the continuing work of Woodard can be developed and shaped through its schools, ensuring that educational performance is enhanced and Woodard's voice in education is both heard and valued.





## Four key themes



Consistent messages, apparent from the consultation, market research and internal analysis, have shaped the strategy. Four key themes emerged:

- **Be known for quality:** Although overall Woodard school pupils perform well compared to the English average, significant variations in performance persist. This variable performance within the group impacts the Woodard brand – we cannot be a leading voice in education if we have under-performing schools.
- **Ensure the sustainability of our schools:** In a flat independent market our schools have to grow and take market share. In a growing state market we need to have a relevant and high quality offering. The strategic plan needs to address how we continue to provide high quality education in an actively Christian environment to all, and in a way that attracts pupils, parents and staff to join Woodard as a group of schools.
- **Be clear about the value Woodard adds:** Every school's unique selling point must emphasise the drive to achieve and sustain quality. Woodard's strategy demonstrates how it will leverage the impact of collaboration across our richly diverse family of schools - independent, state, academies and free schools - in order to research, develop and share best practice.
- **Invest for the future:** We need to invest where there is growth – both demographically and in context of market share. Investment needs to be in terms of both personnel and assets. Key to this is investing in professional capital and development opportunities to enable both to drive up performance and quality and to attract the best staff and governors to our schools.



## Two strategic priorities

The Woodard Board has agreed two strategic priorities to implement these key themes.

### Priority 1: Training Hub Schools

Woodard will develop capacity and capabilities to deliver a world class educational experience by establishing a number of Woodard Training Hub Schools which will facilitate collaboration between students and staff within the family. The Hub Schools will research and deliver a programme of bespoke courses and events initially for Woodard students and staff and eventually for a wider education market. Schools will be encouraged to work in partnership with external organisations to develop and deliver this programme. They will be responsible for planning and preparing all activities. The activities and research findings will be Woodard branded and published.

### Priority 2: Investing to ensure sustainability

A common theme arising from the stakeholder consultation was that the Corporation should be investing in the sustainable future of our schools. The strategy provides for the creation of a Woodard Investment Fund, both from the sale of freehold and from charitable donations. An Investment Committee will be appointed to manage the Fund and advise the Board how best to ensure long-term sustainability.

### How will we describe Woodard in five years' time?

In addressing the key themes and achieving the objectives of our strategy we will have:

- Enhanced capabilities within all Woodard schools. More schools will be performing at a significantly higher standard in all aspects of education;
- A strong reputation for Woodard schools being the best place to teach and to be taught. A name and reputation that attracts people and other schools by its stronger identity and clarity of purpose;
- A distinctive voice for faith schools;
- An organisation of schools working together to drive education forward through collaboration, the sharing of best practice, innovation and leading edge thinking;
- Created new opportunities for school staff which would not normally be available within a single school (e.g. research scholarships, professional links with international opportunities, new project involvement in the UK);
- An investment strategy that attracts the generosity of benefactors and brings educational benefits to all in the family and many beyond.





## News

### Welcome to new Heads

- Dominic Oliver at Lancing College
- Heather Beeby at Lancing College Preparatory School at Worthing
- Ben Figgis at Ardingly College
- Jerry Gear at Denstone College Preparatory School, Smallwood Manor, Uttoxeter
- Dr John Price at St James', Grimsby
- Marianne Gentilli at The Littlehampton Academy
- Gill Hewlett at Kings Priory School, Tynemouth

- Karl Newell at Crompton House Church of England School, Oldham
  - Rachel Hutchinson at St Peter's, Exeter
  - Catherine Huddleston at St Wilfrid's, Blackburn
  - Kat Pugh at St Marylebone School, Westminster
- And, returning for one academic year, Robert McKenzie Johnston at Queen Mary's School.

### A warm welcome to new schools

- Dyson Perrins Church of England School, Malvern
- St Andrew's Church of England School, Croydon

## Events

### The Woodard Musician of the Year

The Woodard Musician of the Year finals take place on Saturday 9 May at 2pm St John's Smith Square, Westminster. Further details and free tickets from [johnsherratt@woodard.co.uk](mailto:johnsherratt@woodard.co.uk)



### The National School Chaplaincy Conference

The National School Chaplaincy Conference takes place at Liverpool Hope University, 18-20 June.

#### SCHOOLS WITH SOUL

*'Spiritual Well-Being in School Communities'*

#### The Third Biennial School Chaplaincy Conference

**Liverpool Hope University, Thursday 18th – Saturday 20th June 2015**

This major international and ecumenical conference is for all involved with school chaplaincy (lay or ordained), pastoral leaders, diocesan education and youth officers, practitioners and policy makers interested in this vital growth area of Christian ministry.

Keynote speakers include:

- Roger Bolton (BBC producer)
- Loretta Minghella (director, Christian Aid)
- Fr. Timothy Radcliffe OP (Dominican theologian)
- Professor Linda Woodhead (Lancaster University)

Extensive opportunities for:

- Time and space to reflect and worship
- Informal networking and sharing ideas
- Discussion groups and practical workshops
- Topical seminars

The three-day conference fee is £370, inclusive of en-suite accommodation, all meals (including the conference dinner) and refreshments.

**However, SCALA members booking before 31st Jan 2015 will pay only £290 (net of discounts).** Delegates should also be eligible for CPD/CME funding from training budgets.

**Don't delay: visit [www.scala.uk.net](http://www.scala.uk.net) to complete your conference booking and payment details.**



## Life at Woodard Schools

To see images of life at the Woodard schools during 2014 go to:

**<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/7qdnjc6216fycr9/AABkYg842vtzIlt76dgnf599a?dl=0>**

Click buttons to the top right of the Dropbox page for image or file name/description views.



**Woodard Voice will be published regularly.  
For more information, or if you have any queries,  
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