

HAMILTON TRUST

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

YEAR ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2007

The trustees have pleasure in presenting their report and the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 30 September 2007.

THE TRUSTEES

The trustees who served the charity during the period were as follows:

MRHJ O'Regan
KW Brooks
GJ McMillan
Mrs J O'Regan

The original trustees were appointed by the settlor and the trustees have the powers to appoint new trustees.

The trustees have an unlimited investment power, conferred by the trust deed.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The Hamilton Trust is a registered charity (registered number 1004205) established under a trust deed dated 1 June 1988.

The stated objects of the Trust are to apply the trust fund for charitable purposes, at the discretion of the trustees.

The trustees have a full meeting at least once each school term with the purpose of setting the overall plans for the Trust, receiving reports and monitoring the activities of the Trust and the overall financial position, and progressing or resolving any difficulties or questions raised.

The Trust's operations are managed by Professor Ruth Merttens (as education director) with executive support from Michael O'Regan (chair of trustees) and from the Education/Project Manager, Dr Deidre Holes. Looking back over the year, Paul Ivey - an experienced outsourced Hamilton writer - filled the position of Project Manager temporarily from August 2006 until he emigrated to Australia in December 2006, from where he still sends regular contributions for our curricular materials. Jeanette Viney was seconded to a temporary role in managing the Hamilton Trust office from the end of November 2006 to mid January 2007 when Deidre Holes took over the permanent role of Education/Project Manager. The office ran very smoothly during the transition period for which we are very grateful to all the staff involved. Deidre has since used her scientific and primary school background to inspire the creation of the first Science Strands to be published by The Trust. The Oxford Trust very kindly agreed to match our funding for this endeavour and our users have welcomed the science plans published to date. Deidre has also overseen the publication of the first New Framework Literacy Units and the successful new Home Page on the Trust's website.

In September 2007 the Trust appointed a new part-time member of staff, Alison Fahey. She has edited materials for us in the past but has now been employed to answer users' emails and thus release other members of staff to concentrate on their specialist tasks. Rebecca Runyard left the employment of the Trust following the birth of her son Coen in April 2007 and they both have our warm wishes; meanwhile, Kay Russell has had a considerable amount of material to process over the year in keeping pace with the increased demand from our teacher users. With Diana Mitcham, an experienced editor who also manages the outside communications - and diary - for Ruth Merttens, the above personnel make up the permanent operational staff for the Trust; we are indeed fortunate to have such a well-knit, flexible and dedicated team.

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The Trust, and the quality of the materials it produces, continue to depend upon our team of freelance writers, editors and resourcers spread across the country and literally the world (three are in Australia). We have been very pleased to retain our experienced outsourced workers and also to employ some new writers who have already become well respected as part of our hard-working team. Due to the effective communication that takes place, often via email, the team remains a close one no matter how far apart they may be geographically.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Hamilton Trust's services provided are principally in support of raising the educational attainment of children up to age eleven within the UK and to support the effectiveness and professional job satisfaction (and hence retention) of primary teachers.

The main focus during the year was in the development of the New Framework Literacy Units based on the Primary Framework for literacy and mathematics published by the DCSF in September 2006. We published some trial Units in both the Spring and Summer Terms 2007 and they were gratefully received by our users who gave us very positive feedback. All the Autumn Term Units were available online by the beginning of the 2007/2008 school year. The Science Strands were our other major focus and extra outsourced writers and editors were taken on to cope with the increased production of materials. Several more Topics for KS2 were also developed during the year, with plans for several more in the pipeline. We try to react to suggestions from our users for which areas of the curriculum to cover.

The Trust has an agreement with Hamilton Education Limited, a 'non-profit-making' company limited by guarantee and independent of the Trust, whereby the company distributes many of the materials developed by the Trust and then passes back a royalty to the Trust. Topics are currently available via Hamilton Education (HE) to individual teachers as a year's subscription for £40 (+VAT), or as part of a package for schools called a CAT Pack, which also gives access to the various Plans. This Complete Access for Teachers (CAT) Pack allows all teachers within a school full access to the site within one or more age ranges. This is currently being sold by HE as a year-long subscription for £120 (+VAT), which is excellent value for money and equates to what a school would pay for a supply teacher for a single day. This 'packaging' of many of the Trust's resources continues to be a great success and currently there are over 1500 schools with a CAT pack.

The Homework resources were completed and well received, with schools purchasing whole-year hard copies as well as using the current ones online. The first Home Pack has been published to help parents have fun with their young children while supporting their learning in a variety of areas.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

The Trust's website statistics show that many tens of thousands used the Hamilton site to access and download adaptable plans for their teaching of literacy, mathematics and now science. This method of distribution of the Trust's resources to such a large number of teachers continues to be a hugely cost-efficient method of dissemination, particularly with such a small core staff. It does require a significant expenditure on the website itself and indeed on the bandwidth to cope with such a high level of downloads, but the total average annual dissemination cost to the Trust per teacher supported remains as little as £2 (very approximately).

In previous years the Trust conducted an online survey to gauge the opinions of our teacher users, and to learn better the different ways in which our materials were used. Given that the survey results were fairly constant and we have learnt that the general email responses we receive are indicative of the successes - and occasional relative disappointments - of our work, we have again this year relied on those emails to provide us with the necessary feedback.

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These email enquiries continue to be the primary source of individual contact with our users, with emails increasing from 511 in May 07 (302 in May 06), with teachers then preoccupied with their busy assessment period, to 850 in July 07 (580 in July 06), July normally being the month in which most teachers prepare for the next school year. Significantly, with schools preparing to start teaching the New Framework Units in September 07, we received 775 emails in August 07. Our users are now generally spending more time on our site during each session: the average time users spent on the site increased from nearly 10 minutes in May 07 to approximately 15 minutes during the Summer holiday (compared with 11 minutes during summer 2006), continuing to back up our presumption that when teachers have more time available they choose to spend longer on the site.

These email enquiries continue to be the primary source of individual contact with our users, with numbers increasing from an illustrative 302 in May 06 (with teachers preoccupied with their busy assessment period) to 580 in July 06 (teachers then preparing for a new school year). It is interesting to note that the average time users spent browsing the site increased to over 11 minutes during the Summer holiday, backing up our presumption that when teachers have more time available they choose to spend longer on the site. The data highlighted the fact that on returning to the hustle and bustle of daily school life this figure had decreased to 3 minutes - it is perhaps just as well that we have been able to make our site more easily and quickly usable over recent years!

We emailed our first newsletter to all our registered users in early September 2007 and this was well received; we have sent out a newsletter each half-term since and we intend to maintain this frequency. We aim to make these newsletters informative and inspiring, containing the latest news as well as tips on how to make the most of our site.

Finally, in support of Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs), the Trust offered a free CD and planning pack to NQTs for the fourth year running, in order to support them during their first term of teaching for the 2007/2008 school year. These packs have again been much appreciated.

A considerable effort was made both in terms of time and money to create and then launch the 'Hamilton Search'. This feature allows users to enter key words to search the entire site for resources, a very powerful tool in saving teacher time as the number of materials available increases rapidly.

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FINANCIAL REVIEW

As anticipated in last year's Review, the actions taken to reduce costs and to increase income have resulted in a much-improved position. Total expenditure for 2007 was £358,000, compared with £423,000 in the previous year. On the income side there have been increased donations from individual teachers as Friends of Hamilton, with these receipts totalling £310,000 (including Gift Aid) in the second full year of this initiative. Additionally, Hamilton Education - which has effectively distributed Trust products at cost in recent years - provided the Trust with a much increased royalty income of £118,000 for the year, mostly from sales of the Topics and CAT Packs developed by the Trust. Total income therefore rose to £445,000 (2006: £364,000) and for the first year ever Hamilton Trust had a surplus, of £80,000, from its operating income over expenditure; this has made a useful contribution towards the original development costs of over £900,000 for the Trust's curricular resources.

It is likely, though not definite, that this new financial model, whereby operating income is of the same order as expenditure, should be maintained over the next few years, which means that the overall finances of the Trust have been successfully transformed and a more stable platform reached for the Trust's current and future activities.

In addition, at the end of the year, the Trust sold one of the two houses it lets out to teachers, achieving a capital gain of £100,000 from the sale.

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RESERVES

The trustees seek to have sufficient reserves so that there is negligible financial risk to the Trust's near-term plans. Specifically, at the start of each financial year the assets held in bank deposits, when added to 50% of the value of its freehold assets, should be higher than the previous year's net expenditure and also higher than the forecast gross annual expenditure for the next year less 50% of the forecast income from investments, grants and other revenue.

The trustees take the view that it is prudent to keep this money as cash (mostly as Treasury deposits) because they are mindful that the Trust might face significant expenditure in the next 12 or so months and also the public markets are noticeably volatile.

It is, however, also the case that the trustees would not want to hold more funds than was considered prudent to ensure the maintenance of its programme for educational support over the next few years, and so the trustees will continue actively to review the Trust's Reserves policy.

PLANS FOR FUTURE PERIODS

Since the publication of the DCSF's new Primary Framework for literacy and mathematics in September 2006, we have done a considerable amount of work to ensure that the materials we provide for literacy teaching meet the updated requirements in overall teaching objectives. Neither of the New Frameworks is statutory, and therefore many schools are doing as advised and only changing their practice where they feel that improvements need to be made in line with the New Framework suggestions and approach. The information from most of our users - and also from our contacts amongst advisors and in the inspectorate - is that a majority of schools are changing their planning for literacy but many are not doing so for mathematics, where they are simply increasing their focus on speaking and listening and on problem-solving. However, so that the Trust can continue to support teachers with planning in 2008/2009 and beyond, we have recently responded to the growing number of requests for adaptation of our maths plans to meet these new requirements by starting work on a new series.

Development of major changes to the Data Management Tool (DMT) for our website have already begun and we are looking forward to launching a new improved website by autumn 2008 with an updated Search facility that includes new keywords as appropriate, so that all the materials are searchable as soon as they are added to the site. The new DMT will be an online tool so that immediate additions/amendments can be made to the site by staff in our office without the transfer of data from our database to the website provider's database, which has been a constant source of possible errors or communication difficulties. The first step of moving our data to two new servers with much greater bandwidth was forced on us earlier than expected in September 07, when due to an enormous surge in use of our site during the first few days of the new school year the site slowed down considerably; the greater bandwidth we now have in place has successfully restored previous levels of service.

On a different aspect of the Trust's work, we are now leading an energy-saving project in Oxfordshire (the Schools Energy Efficiency Project, or SEEP-2) with 20 of the county's secondary schools taking part. This project follows our successful pilot project (SEEP) with two schools and is run in conjunction with the Oxfordshire Independent and State School Partnership (OISSP); the participants comprise 13 maintained schools and 7 from the independent sector. We believe our focus on working with schools to reduce their energy consumption is important (even if less eye-catching than schools installing say their own wind turbines, or new-build eco-projects) and we hope that the experiences of SEEP-2 will provide a useful case study for national policy.

Finally, as a continuation of our support for the schools in Oxford's areas of relative disadvantage, the Trust has agreed to support a new academy, The Oxford Academy, which will open in September 2008, replacing Peers School, to serve the children from The Leys, Rose Hill and Littlemore communities. The Trust has given financial and curricular support to the primary schools in that area of Oxford for many years now, first with the HT Maths and Reading Projects, then taking a lead in the HOSP EAZ, and so we are pleased to be involved in this way. It is likely that the Trust's future work will include further curricular and in-service teacher training support to the primary schools which will feed into the academy.

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RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TRUSTEES

Law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the trustees have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). The financial statements are required by law to give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the surplus or deficit of the charity for that period.

In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and which enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 1993. The trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

6 Northmoor Rd
Oxford
OX2 6UP

Signed on behalf of the trustees

MRHJ O'Regan
Trustee

18 July 2008

The Full Financial Report can be viewed on the Hamilton Trust website too.