

Camden Learning GOVERNORS' NEWSLETTER

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

I hope you all had a good summer. Certainly, staff and pupils have returned with energy and enthusiasm and September has been a very busy month. Stephen Hall, CEO of Camden Learning, outlines in this Newsletter the many successes schools saw in this year's results. Our congratulations to all schools on their achievements.

The first major Camden school event of the year was **Moving On**, held at the Francis Crick Institute. Camden's secondary schools were all there to meet with potential students and their families, a record number of whom attended the event. Camden Learning had its own stall promoting the role of school governors to a wider audience and Owen Rees reports that it generated real interest from attendees. It was a fantastic evening, and characteristic of many of Camden's attractions and strengths, its diversity, the sense of community between its schools and the borough's rich links with cutting edge science and technology.

The enthusiasm for education and the possibilities it offers were palpable. Against this backdrop, the recent report **Listening to, and learning from, parents in the attendance crisis** makes for sobering reading. The report finds that the relationship between parents and schools is increasingly difficult. The issues described within the report are most acute amongst attitudes to attendance and have been affected by Covid, with parents less likely to believe that every day of attendance counts towards educational outcomes.



It also identifies additional issues with children and young people's mental health, once again severely affected by Covid and the effect on families of the cost-of-living crisis on families. This was followed last week by a **House of Commons Report** which outlined the issues a range of possible support.

These reports reflect the experiences of schools in Camden, with attendance across the borough, before and after Covid, below neighbouring authorities and the national average. Later in the Newsletter you will see a short description of **Every School Day Counts**. This is the campaign we have launched, in collaboration with Camden Council, to raise awareness with parents and carers about the importance of attendance. We are currently putting together the Implementation Plan for Year 2 of **Building Back Stronger** and improving attendance remains a top priority. Most governing bodies are already focusing hard on this issue and Owen Rees has built a number of development sessions into the governor development programme for the year. We would be keen to hear from you if there is more Camden Learning can be doing to help.

All good wishes for the year ahead and my continuing thanks for all your hard work and support for Camden children and young people.

Dame Christine Gilbert
Chair, Camden Learning



GOVERNORS' TRAINING

GLOBAL MAJORITY GOVERNORS' NETWORK
Wednesday 11 October 6pm



GOVERNOR INDUCTION 1: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
Thursday 16 November 6pm



GOVERNOR INDUCTION 2: UNDERSTANDING YOUR SCHOOL CONTEXT AND CHALLENGING AND SUPPORTING SCHOOL LEADERS
Thursday 7 December 10:30am



SAFEGUARDING GOVERNORS' NETWORK
Monday 16 October 6pm



CAMDEN CHAIRS' NETWORK
Tuesday 21 November 6pm



HEALTH AND SAFETY FOR GOVERNORS
Thursday 7 December 6pm



NEURODIVERSITY AND GOVERNING BOARDS
Tuesday 17 October 6pm



GOVERNOR INDUCTION 1: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
Wednesday 22 November 10:30am



GOVERNOR INDUCTION 3 : SAFEGUARDING
Tuesday 12 December 6pm



OFSTED FOR GOVERNORS
Tuesday 7 November 6pm



GOVERNOR INDUCTION 2: UNDERSTANDING YOUR SCHOOL CONTEXT AND CHALLENGING AND SUPPORTING SCHOOL LEADERS
Wednesday 29 November 6pm



SUCCESSION PLANNING
Wednesday 13 December 6pm



SAFER RECRUITMENT FOR HT AND GOVERNOR
Tuesday 14 November 9am



FINANCIAL EFFICIENCIES
Thursday 30 November 6pm



MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOL FINANCES FOR SCHOOL GOVERNORS
Tuesday 16 January 6pm



WELCOME TO NEW HEADS

We would like to extend a warm welcome to Camden's new headteachers and heads of schools:

- **Alex Wilson**, Headteacher of School, Heath School
- **Ben Williams**, Head of School, Hampstead Parochial Church of England School
- **Chloe Toop**, Headteacher, Our Lady's Roman Catholic School
- **Clare McBride**, Headteacher, Christopher Hatton School (job sharing with long-term head, Gwen Lee, until January 2024)
- **Emma O'Reilly**, Head of School, St Patrick's Catholic School
- **Isabel Whiteley**, Head of School, St George the Martyr Church of England School
- **Kate Metselaar**, Head of School, Haverstock School
- **Kate Roscoe**, Head of School, Emmanuel Church of England School
- **Liam Frost**, Headteacher, Primrose Hill School
- **Lisa Hyland**, Head of School, Brecknock School
- **Mark Anthony**, Headteacher, Maria Fidelis Catholic School
- **Martha Collins**, Head of School, Acland Burghley School
- **Meg Jones**, Headteacher, Kingsgate School
- **Natalie O'Donovan**, Head of School, St Joseph's Catholic School
- **Stephen Mitchell**, Headteacher, Kings Cross Academy



MUCH TO CELEBRATE IN THIS YEAR'S RESULTS

The place of carefully planned curriculum models that allow for the repetition of key knowledge over time has been central to much recent educational thinking.

Before the spring of 2020, it was unthinkable that these routines would be interrupted with school examinations cancelled and extended school closures. And last year additional bank holidays and industrial disputes continued to interrupt the rhythm of school life.

The local and national figures for school attendance and the rapid increase in pupils who are persistently absent tell a story of an education system that is working in a time of great adversity. Amongst this mix, statutory examinations are once again being published. This year's results are the first since the pandemic to be published nationally at a school level, with GCSE and A levels reverting to grading last used in 2019.

Early indications from data at Key Stage 1 suggest that the percentage of Camden primary school pupils achieving the expected standard in reading and writing remains slightly below the 2019 figure, at 65% and 72% respectively, with maths making a better recovery at 73%. This is a cohort for whom early years education was most disrupted by school closures. The impact on basic skills including oracy has been well documented nationally, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. These tests will become non-statutory in 2024.

While just 59% of pupils nationally achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and maths at Key Stage 2, early provisional results suggest Camden continues to achieve well above this at 70%, with strong progress scores. The comparison gap for disadvantaged and other pupils in Camden stands at 16%, while nationally it is 23%, so the difference is narrower but still significant. Provisional reading and mathematics outcomes fell slightly though remained above national averages.

Camden Learning provides data summaries for all Camden schools and these now highlight the relative difference in attainment for disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils, to support a continued focus on minimising this learning gap and the impact of strategies. Governors should review these at their autumn term meetings.

For secondary schools, the Ofqual announcement of a return to pre-pandemic grading meant that national results were, as expected, lower than last summer. However, the provisional 2023 results show that the percentage of Camden Year 11 students achieving a 'strong pass' in both GCSE English and mathematics (grade 5 or above) was 51%. This is above the borough's

2019 figure of 46% and the 2019 national average of 43%. The percentage of Camden GCSE students achieving a 'standard pass' in both English and maths (grade 4 and above) was the same as the 2019 figure and above that year's national average. Post 16 students also achieved as well as or better than those in 2019.

There were many individual stories that really brought alive the difference and opportunities that have been made possible by the education they have received in Camden. There is much to celebrate here.

Some Camden schools have made notable achievement gains, with attainment gaps between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils closed or removed altogether. Disadvantaged pupils can have the most barriers to learning but it is for them that education can make the most difference. Typically, it is the belief and ambition of teachers and school leaders that has the most impact and where the challenge and scrutiny of impact from school governors can really make a difference.

One of our four shared foundations for success, that is so well articulated in Building Back Stronger, is for an ambitious inclusive system that breaks down the barriers to learning by calling out and addressing inequalities so that no one is left behind. The imperative here is for schools themselves to recognise where their own provision has, and has not, met needs well enough and to use this as a lever to even greater ambition.

Further detailed exploration of 2023 data will be possible later in the year but, in the meantime, I hope that you will be seeking to explore and challenge available achievement data as a valuable tool to understanding the impact of the work that has been undertaken in the last year.



'EVERY SCHOOL DAY COUNTS' CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED

At the start of this academic year, the Secretary of State for Education, the schools' minister and the Children's Commissioner have all emphasised the importance of good attendance. Locally, it remains an ongoing concern for headteachers.

Attendance levels are lower than they were pre pandemic and it remains a priority both locally and nationally to improve this.

To help support regular attendance in the borough's schools, Camden Learning and Camden Council's communications team have been working to develop a publicity campaign aimed at parents and carers which reminds them about the importance of good attendance.

Posters and suggestions for possible social media posts were distributed to schools in September. Schools can also use a set of graphics for the 'Every School Day Counts' logos on their social media, letters, posters and websites.

If you would like to know more about attendance legislation, how governors can support attendance and governors' roles and responsibilities in this area, there is a training session via Zoom set to take place on Thursday 5 October between 5:30pm and 7pm. Places can be booked via the [Governor Hub](#).



NEW CPD PROGRAMME AVAILABLE TO BOOK

Highlights this year include:

Camden Governor Briefing:

Each term we will offer a free 'rapid-fire' briefing via Zoom highlighting key updates for governors. This will be recorded to allow playback at other times via the [Governor Hub](#).

Global Majority Governors' Network:

Last year saw the launch, jointly with Islington Council, of this new network. Aimed at governors from Black, Asian and other underrepresented backgrounds but open to all, it met three times, with a high number of governors attending. At each meeting, alongside ample opportunity for networking, two key themes are discussed. Themes covered so far have included the performance of groups, the role of the Arts, the role of schools in supporting pupils with SEND and recruitment onto boards.

Equalities and Diversity:

Our equality training sessions this year will be led by Carla Myrie, a former deputy headteacher and currently Equality, Diversity and Inclusion consultant to Wandsworth and Richmond local education authorities. Other sessions in this area include:

- Orlene Badu on becoming an anti-racist school
- Daniel Brook from Neuro Diversity Specialists on neuro-diverse boards
- Shekeila Scarlett on her path from a pupil at risk of exclusion to becoming a chair of governors

Chairs' Network:

We will offer a termly in-person meeting focused on chairs, with significant opportunities for discussion and networking. Chairs will split into separate primary and secondary groups for part of the meeting.

SEND and Safeguarding:

We have introduced network meetings aimed at SEND and safeguarding governors.

This is to allow a more detailed focus on the particularities of those roles and a reduction in the introductory material contained in our training sessions.

Attendance and Behaviour:

We have new sessions on attendance and secondary behaviour, honing in on key priorities for Camden schools.

Schools Finance:

Our 'Management of School Finances and Financial Efficiencies' offer will provide a different perspectives on this important and perennial topic.

Camden Learning's latest training and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme is available for booking on the [Governor Hub](#).



GOVERNOR DIVERSITY UPDATE

During the summer term, our third annual governor diversity monitoring survey was carried out. With a return rate of approximately 46%, the data are increasingly robust and show:

- Governors from Black, Asian and mixed ethnicity backgrounds are underrepresented in the survey in comparison to the overall Camden and school populations.
- Governors from a White British background make up around 60% of our governors, compared to a local population of 35.4% as measured in the last census. This appears to be falling slightly but not significantly.
- There are more governors identifying as female than male by around 60-40.
- The number of governors reporting a disability is broadly in line with the Camden population.
- Governors are older than the population, with only 20% of those surveyed under 45, and only 6% below 35.
- There are significantly fewer governors describing their religion as Muslim than amongst people in the overall Camden and school populations.



These are not issues unique to Camden. The National Governors' Association's 'Everyone On Board' campaign records over 90% of respondents to their annual survey from a White British background. Camden Learning continues to work to address this, with our stand at the recent 'Moving On' event at the Francis Crick Institute being the most recent example.

A new suite of resources has been created for school governing bodies to support diverse recruitment. These include guidance on recruitment, additional resources to support advertisements and selection and revised terms of reference. The guidance in relation to elections of parent and staff governors has also been updated.

This year, planned events include a further session in November with [Orlene Badu](#) on developing an anti-racist school and a session in February from [Shekeila Scarlett](#) on her journey from being at

risk of permanent exclusion to becoming a chair of governors. In October there will also be a session on neurodiversity on teams and boards led by Daniel Brook of Neurodiversity Specialists. These can all be booked through the [Governor Hub](#).



HOW STEAM AMBASSADORS CAN SUPPORT CAREERS EVENTS

The STEAM Strategy sets out an ambitious target to reach every pupil, every year with STEAM opportunities; STEAM Ambassadors are available to support every Camden school - from Early Years to Post-16 - in a plethora of ways, from talks in assemblies and industry expertise in lessons, to mock interviews and speed networking.

Nearly 60 employers are now signed up to the Camden STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) Pledge and are continuing to provide essential career support to local schools. We encourage every school to take advantage of this offer.

There are now over 200 **Camden STEAM Ambassadors**, from organisations connected with the programme, giving their time to support activities in local schools such as:

- Careers talks
- Teacher speed networking events
- Curriculum projects
- Masterclasses
- Visits to employers
- GCSE options and Year 11 progression sessions
- Help with preparation for work experience

Pledge employers range from global institutions to small and medium sized enterprises. They include Google, Arup, The Francis Crick Institute, The Roundhouse, Bennetts Associates, Moonbug Entertainment, Lendlease, Momentum Transport, AutogenAI, Wayve and Central Saint Martin.

STEAM Ambassadors play an essential role in helping bring to life the STEAM strategy vision of "building a future where Camden is a beacon of inclusive opportunity and innovation".

The aim is for young people, regardless of background, to be inspired by STEAM opportunities and to be ready for the world of work in Camden's STEAM industries. And we want STEAM employers to have access to a local diverse talent pipeline to meet their recruitment needs and help them to innovate and flourish.

Specific activities which STEAM volunteers have supported include Ambassadors from media company Moonbug Entertainment supporting primary and secondary careers days and STEAM Hub events with teachers. Moonbug has also taken part in the annual flagship Camden STEAM Work Experience Week for Year 12 students.

Many Ambassadors have roles that are guaranteed to inspire pupils, such as the Google designer responsible for making Android phones easy to understand and accessible to billions of customers. There's also the artificial intelligence manager at Wayve who has personally built a self-driving car.

To book a STEAM Ambassador to support a school project or give a careers talk, visit the [STEAM webpage](#).

For more information contact lorraine.lawson@camden.gov.uk or richard.donnelly@camden.gov.uk in the Camden STEAM team.



WEB SURVEY RESULTS

This summer we completed our annual web survey which checks all Camden schools against the expectations for their websites.

We looked at nine areas, chosen either because they have seen a recent change or were looked at in a previous survey and returned a lower percentage.

The areas were:

- Equalities
- School Opening Hours
- School Uniform Information and Policy
- Financial Information Regulations
- Governance
- Safeguarding
- Behaviour Policy
- Attendance Policy
- SEND Information Report

The key documents for schools to be aware of are: [What Maintained Schools Must Publish Online](#) and [What Academies, Free Schools and Colleges Must Publish Online](#)

The overall percentages were as follows:

Equalities 50%	School Opening Hours 50%	School Uniform Information and Policy 80%
Governance 80%	Safeguarding Policy 96%	Financial Information Regulations 68%
Behaviour Policy 82%	Attendance Policy 52%	SEND Information Report 82%

**Overall
70%**

Web Survey results continued..

The following are the principal issues identified in each area:

Equalities:

Lack of annual review

School Opening Hours:

Total hours not published

Uniform:

Policy not published or insufficient clarity

Financial Information Regulations:

Salary information not published

Governance:

Delayed publication of attendance or Register of Interests

Behaviour Policy:

Lack of annual review

Attendance Policy:

Non-publication

SEND Information Report:

Lack of annual review



Please contact Owen Rees
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with any queries or for support.



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Ideas for items all welcome, please send to:

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