

# Camden Learning

# GOVERNORS' NEWSLETTER



## GOVERNORS' TRAINING

### **EQUALITIES GOVERNORS' DUTIES**

Tuesday 5 March 2024 6pm - 7:30pm



### **SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION FOR SCHOOL GOVERNORS**

Wednesday 6 March 2024 6pm - 7:30pm



### **GOVERNOR INDUCTION 3 - SAFEGUARDING FOR NEW GOVERNORS**

Monday 11 March 2024 1:30pm - 2:30pm



### **SAFER RECRUITMENT FOR HEADTEACHERS AND GOVERNORS**

Wednesday 13 March 2024 9am - 4:30pm



### **CAMDEN CHAIRS' NETWORK**

Thursday 14 March 2024 6pm - 8pm



### **GOVERNORS' ROLE IN THE CURRICULUM - SECONDARY**

Wednesday 20 March 2024 6pm - 7:30pm



### **GOVERNORS' ROLE IN THE CURRICULUM - PRIMARY**

Tuesday 26 March 2024 6pm - 7:30pm



### **UPDATE FOR CHILDREN IN CARE, CHILDREN IN NEED AND CHILDREN ON A CHILD PROTECTION PLAN**

Wednesday 17 April 2024 6pm - 7:30pm



## A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

**It was good to see well over half our schools represented at the Annual General Meeting at the end of January.**

When Camden Learning was set up as an independent school company in 2016, all Camden schools chose to become legal members of the company as did Camden Council. Members control the way the company is run through a set of rules known as the Articles of Association. Each member of the company is entitled to have one vote for any resolution at the AGM. This year, the resolutions were just the standard ones and not at all contentious. Alan Chesters, Chair of Camden Learning's Finance and General Purposes Committee, presented the Directors' Report, Financial Statements and Auditor's Report for the financial year 2022/3. Stephen Hall, CEO of Camden Learning, presented the **Annual Review** highlighting achievements during the school year 2022/3 and progress towards strategic objectives. Although 2022/3 was another challenging year, with the impact of the pandemic still being felt strongly in schools, Stephen was able to highlight many terrific achievements too. As governors, I am sure you will recognise both these challenges but also many achievements in your own schools. These reports from Alan and Stephen were formally received by members. It was noted too that the contract for our auditors would be re-tendered for 2024/5.

The AGM is usually a short meeting and as a way of attracting colleagues to attend, we always invite an interesting speaker to talk to us immediately afterwards. This year, the Annual Lecture was presented by Dr Mary Bousted, previously Joint General Secretary of the National Education Union (NEU). Mary stood down from that role last summer and has just been made Honorary Professor at University College London's Institute of Education, where she plans to do further work to support the professionalism of teacher and this was the focus of her presentation to us. She highlighted concerns, not only about fewer teachers coming into teaching but also about retention. Mary told us that more teachers left the profession in 2023 for reasons other than retirement than at any other time on record. One in four teachers now leave teaching within 3 years and a third within 5 years.

I know recruitment and retention of teachers is a concern of many governing bodies but so too is that of support staff. Mary talked about ways in which schools could counter the stress and exhaustion experienced by teachers and leaders. There are no easy answers but Mary did offer some practical suggestions for reducing what she called workload intensity and promoting teacher professionalism. As part of our implementation of **Building Back Stronger**, it will be important to reflect on these and think creatively about what we might do within and across schools to help staff feel more engaged and positive about their jobs. Mary's slides are [here](#) and you might want to discuss some of her proposals in a sub-committee or even as part of an item on your board agenda.

One of the many inspiring leaders that we have managed to retain in Camden is Kate Frood. When Kate was leaving the headship of Eleanor Palmer School in July 2021, after 18 years of brilliant leadership, I watched a video made to celebrate her time in the school. It captured her drive to inspire a love of learning in both children and teachers, her passion to drive standards ever higher and commitment to the thousands of children she has taught and teachers she has worked with over the years. Fortunately, leading the excellent programmes she has helped establish for Early Career Teachers (ECTs) and the National Professional Qualifications Frameworks (NPQs) for established teachers, has meant we have kept Kate working within Camden Learning and she is now helping to organise Camden's first Biennale, an exhibition of children's

art which is mentioned later in the Newsletter. While she has been doing all this, Kate has also managed to write a book. It is an easy and fascinating read which brings alive the fun of teaching and learning Maths in the primary years. You'll find the specific details later in the Newsletter.

My continuing thanks for all you do constantly to support the leaders and staff in your schools. They do appreciate it and your support is a vitally important contribution to the education of children and young people in Camden.

Finally, If you have any thoughts or ideas about what sort of things you'd like to see in this Newsletter or how it could be improved, we are keen to hear them, so please do let us know.

All good wishes

*Christine*

**Dame Christine Gilbert  
Chair, Camden Learning**



## ACLAND BURGHLEY DANCERS AND MUSICIANS AT THE FAIRY QUEEN OPERA

**A group of Acland Burghley students last month took part in the Fairy Queen Community Opera at the South Bank Centre with their resident orchestra and primary school ensembles.**

The production took inspiration from Henry Purcell's semi-opera 'The Fairy Queen,' originally based on William Shakespeare's masterpiece 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'. However, this rendition offered a fresh perspective on the classic, courtesy of composer James Redwood and librettist/director Hazel Gould. Their significant rewrites breathed new life into the age-old tale, giving it a contemporary edge while maintaining the core essence of the original work.



The show had a glowing reviews from The Times, which wrote:

*“What won’t be erased were the polished and imaginative dance routines from 20 Acland Burghley students. At a time when the arts seem marginalised in so many state schools, this was a heartwarming example of what fine standards can be achieved with inspiring leadership.”*

While BNN Breaking said:

*“The show stands as a testament to what can be achieved when professional musicians team up with local school communities to create ground-breaking and large-scale performances.”*

The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment’s move to the school has marked a new chapter in its educational endeavours. The relocation has allowed the orchestra to venture into a diverse range of projects, the most notable being a large-scale show that brought together 191 performers. This ensemble comprised students from local secondary and primary schools and a community choir alongside the orchestra.



Speaking after performing in the opera, Year 10 student Jack Codling said: *“It was a fun experience, it’s an experience I haven’t had before and it was interesting working with different organisations like the orchestra.”*

Oscar Fichelson from Year 11 added: *“I was really happy to be given my own piece. I choreographed the ‘Thisbe and Pyramus’ dance piece. Overall, it was just a really enriching experience.”*

## EVERY SCHOOL DAY COUNTS

### Brookfield Primary School

Last year Brookfield had a big focus on improving attendance and punctuality which saw it shoot up Camden’s attendance league table and grab a top 10 spot within the borough.

The school recognised that attendance could not simply sit with one person and had to involve all stakeholders. Through staff training, parent coffee mornings, assemblies and other initiatives it ensured that attendance was reflected upon every week.

Brookfield shoe-horned discussing attendance into as many communications as possible, including parental meetings, curriculum mornings and parent workshops.

If a child was not in school, the phase leader would call their home that morning to see if they could come in for a later start. A governor was also appointed with responsibility for attendance, who met half-termly with the attendance lead to scrutinise data. And a new system for monitoring the attendance of every child was created to identify barriers early.

Every School Day Counts

Every School Day Counts

Don't let your child miss out

- Attending regularly is important for your child's happiness and success in school
- Attending 95% or more of their classes means they're more likely to perform better in national tests at age 11 and gain good passes in their GCSEs when they're 16.

Please support your child to go to school regularly. If you need help or advice, please speak to your child's school.

Early interventions offered by the school included referrals to the school nurse and support with home collections.

Brookfield has also worked closely with Camden Learning – inviting its link from the Pupil Attendance Service (PAS) in for an audit to identify areas it could develop. It also delivered staff training.

## Rhyl Primary School

Rhyl has also taken a whole school approach to improving attendance and worked with families to identify issues and support improvement.

Its approach to attendance is one of relentlessness and always following up absences with every family, as well as recognising and rewarding improvement, both with children and families.

All staff have made sure that children know how important it is that they come to school every day.

Among the strategies introduced that have proved most successful are:

- Daily tannoy announcement for classes with 100% attendance
- Notice on class doors with the previous week attendance to remind children and staff who all strive to reach 100%
- Weekly attendance award in assembly with the highest class in each key stage having an extra five minutes playtime
- Marvellous Me app used to send a virtual badge home every Friday to each child that has 100% attendance that week
- Free breakfast clubs offered to children with low attendance or punctuality
- Walking bus service for parents to support with getting children to school across two sites
- Staff and attendance governor collecting children from home who have serious persistent absence

- School attendance officers at the playground gates each morning to welcome families and build good relationships with parents. This has resulted in parents phoning to say their child has woken up and does not want to come in, so the school phone the child or go to collect them and bring them into school
- Engaging parents is key and through communications Rhyl makes clear attendance is a school priority:
  - Every week the school's attendance is updated on the website and is printed on the school's newsletter
  - An attendance board on both sites is updated weekly
  - Parent coffee mornings have an attendance focus once per half term
  - Traffic light letters are sent home each half term letting parents know a child's attendance to date
  - At parents' evenings teachers have each child's attendance and highlight impact on attainment of both good and poor attendance. The senior leadership team attend meetings with parents where attendance is a concern to reinforce messaging

The school attendance officers also log every child's attendance weekly and compare it to the previous week. If there is a dip, parents are contacted to discuss any support needed. Where attendance improves congratulation emails are sent, but where it continues to be a concern meetings are arranged with parents to engage early before it becomes a serious issue.

Rhyl is also working at building links with secondary school attendance officers, so it can share information regarding families with children in both schools.

## NEW SUMMER CELEBRATION OF CAMDEN ART

An exciting new event is taking place this July! The **Camden Biennale** will become a sister event to the Royal Albert Hall Music Festival; a biennial celebration that every school in the borough takes part in to showcase Camden's artistic talent and diversity.

GCSE, A Level and degree students routinely show their final pieces. This will be a similar showcasing event but one which shows development from Early Years to A Level across our schools and celebrates pupils and the arts in Camden. The **Camden Biennale** will capture and celebrate the hard work of our students in a way that shows the whole borough - and London and beyond - the high quality, creative and inclusive artwork in our schools and gives our pupils a brilliant opportunity to widen their portfolios and horizons.



It will run from **11-17 July** in the exhibition spaces of Central Saint Martins (CSM), University of the Arts London, at Granary Square and across the public realm at King's Cross. The exhibition spaces include CSM's Lethaby Gallery and public Window Galleries. Anthony Gormley has agreed to play a part and we hope to involve other eminent artists.

The aim is for every Camden primary school to submit six pieces of art, with at least one from each key stage, and secondaries to submit nine, with three from each key stage. Schools will be asked to choose pieces by May half term and a proforma will then be sent out ahead of the pieces being brought to CSM in June.

We are grateful to the wards Belsize, Frognal, Holborn and Covent Garden who are supporting the funding of this project. Having secured sufficient funds to run the main event, we are now seeking additional grants to facilitate a series of art workshops in schools.

We hope governing bodies will promote and engage with this latest initiative. If any governors have personal contacts with artists who may wish to play a part, or links with potential funders, please contact [kate.frood@camdenlearning.org.uk](mailto:kate.frood@camdenlearning.org.uk)



## DIVERSITY UPDATE

This half-term saw Shekeila Scarlett visit Camden governors to describe her journey from permanent exclusion to Chair of Governors.

Shekeila is one of Britain's youngest Chairs of Governors at 26. She talked about her own experience of being at risk of permanent exclusion and her pathway into governance in the charity and education sectors.

She led a vital discussion of what it means for governing bodies to be inclusive, the barriers that new governors face and how to meaningfully identify and include younger

governors. It was a thought provoking and often inspiring session from a speaker with a highly different perspective.

The Global Majority Governor' Network met on **Thursday 29 February** at 5 Pancras Square and included presentations on the performance of different groups within Camden in the 2023 national outcomes, as well as a discussion on the recent survey on how to develop the network and increase and sustain it. If you haven't been, it's a welcoming group for governors from Black, Asian and other underrepresented backgrounds and we're sure you'll find it a valuable and affirming experience.

## GOVERNOR BRIEFING

This term's Governor Briefing had three main areas of focus.

- 1 Firstly, Camden Council's Prevent Education Officer Jane Murphy outlined the recent changes to the Prevent guidance, following the recent review of the programme. This followed the 2022 review of the Prevent programme, which meant that there was a change to the objective 'to have due regard to the need to prevent people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism'. Jane set out the local and national approaches to Prevent and how governors could learn more about their specific responsibilities.
- 2 Secondly, Michelle Beresford set out the current consultation from the Department of Education on its guidance on Gender Questioning Children. The consultation, which is still open, allows individuals to respond to the guidance and give their views. Michelle offered a summary of the impact of the guidance if established, and how schools were working together in this area.
- 3 Finally, Camden Learning Chief Executive Stephen Hall summarised the national outcomes data from the perspective of different groups. One area of focus was the gap between advantaged and disadvantaged pupils, which was common across age groups and other demographics. Stephen's presentation preceded group discussions on the effective use of data by governors to challenge their schools and the potential for other models of challenge to assist in this area.



A video and audio recording of the briefing, along with the slides and supporting resources, are available on the [Governor Hub](#).

## CAMDEN LEARNING ANNUAL REVIEW 2022-23

We are pleased to share the Camden Learning [Annual Review, 2022/23](#). Although it was another challenging year, as the Report illustrates, there is still much to celebrate. It shows just some of the many achievements of our schools during the last school year and the positive impact they have had on the lives of children and young people and on their families.



# PARENTKIND: HOW COULD A PTA ENRICH THE EDUCATION OF EVERY CHILD IN YOUR SCHOOL?

**Over the last decade, Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) have raised more than £1 billion for their school communities. This fundraising has enriched the education of children and young people and contributes to resources and experiences within schools that otherwise wouldn't materialise.**

The national charity **Parentkind** sits at the heart of the PTA community, bringing together close to 13,000 schools already working with parents to deliver greater outcomes for children. It brings specialist fundraising support and advice to parent volunteers so that every school can benefit from a successful PTA. The aforementioned £1 billion raised by their community has helped to fund IT equipment, educational resources, school trips, outdoor learning areas, school libraries and playground equipment, to name a few.

Most PTAs are small charities that run as a separate entity from the school, working collaboratively with headteachers to understand where PTA fundraising would best impact their school environment and community.

Nightingale PTA, part of the Parentkind community, supports a large primary school in East London which is diverse in every sense: financially, ethnically and in disability status. They work together to understand their school's challenges and use a three-priority framework that has allowed them to allocate funds with their headteacher effectively. Their approach focuses on school infrastructure projects, schemes to add long-term value to their school (such as a sensory garden they recently completed), community support, schemes to help with the cost of the school day (such as funding free school meals outside those already provided) and activities that enhance the learning experiences in the classroom (such as school trips). This approach means that all children in the school will benefit over time and has helped to bring together and support all stakeholders of the PTA: the school, the parents, and most importantly, the children.

Parentkind is now aiming to fundraise at a national level and will be seeking funding from larger companies, foundations, philanthropists, government sources and beyond to further support member PTAs with the work they carry out for their schools and communities.

Director of Fundraising Heather Ridley has said: *"This is an enormously exciting time for the charity and a fantastic opportunity to help Parentkind members deliver even more for the children they work tirelessly to support. We'll be raising funds to distribute directly to members,*



*enabling their hard work to have even more impact."*

The impact of parental involvement in education is evidenced in improving the outcomes of children, and parents volunteering in this capacity contribute to this. It can mean that a school's connection with its parent community is strengthened, and while a PTA's priority is to raise funds for the school, they deem their second biggest role to be building community. Parentkind has seen parent volunteers achieve incredible feats such as helping to save schools from closure, hosting events that embrace cultural diversity across their school, connecting the school community with the wider local community and so much more. All contribute to a more enriching experience for the children within the school and a greater sense of community spirit.

Parentkind was started in 1956 by a group of pioneer parents with a passion about parental involvement in their children's learning and who felt they needed a voice nationally as well as at a local level.



The charity supports parent volunteers on PTAs through a bespoke hub to raise funds for their school community by providing the tools, guidance and resources to run financially successful events, apply for grants, seek corporate sponsorship and more. They also work with Zurich Insurance to provide insurance for PTAs and have a dedicated PTA Community Team that is on hand Monday to Friday to guide parents and schools in membership.

Parentkind can also help your school set up a PTA if you don't yet have one. They will provide the insight and support your PTA will need to manage their committee, fundraise for your school and bring your community together with events and activities. And they provide guidance on handpicked approved suppliers, recommended by other members and verified by the charity to be on a bespoke directory.

Research has shown that the benefits of engaging the whole school community, including parents, can be significant for schools. Parentkind points to positives such as better pupil behaviour, higher attendance, fewer exclusions and better results.

If you would like to find out more about the benefits that this parent-led initiative could bring to your school and how you can approach parents to start a PTA, please contact Shula Farnie.

Shula can be contacted on [shula.farnie@parentkind.org](mailto:shula.farnie@parentkind.org) or visit [parentkind.org/your-first-PTA](https://parentkind.org/your-first-PTA)



## GOVERNOR CONFERENCE TO TAKE PLACE IN MAY

**This year's Governor Conference will take place on Saturday 18 May at Maria Fidelis School in Drummond Crescent near Euston Station.**

The morning will comprise a keynote speech, followed by a selection of workshops on key themes and finally lunch for all attendees. Unlimited places are available for schools who subscribe to the Governor Training Package and it is one of the buzziest and most engaging events of the year.

The keynote address is planned to be given by Marc Rowland from Unity Schools Partnership, a leading thinker and writer on disadvantage. He will discuss governors' role in ensuring equal treatment and high outcomes for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.

We will also be having workshops on a range of themes. Viv Grant of Integrity Coaching will lead a session entitled 'Headteacher Wellbeing: How governors can combine compassion and challenge to help school leaders thrive', which will draw upon insights gained from her extensive experience as a former headteacher and leading provider of coaching services.

More detail on other workshops will follow in the next few weeks.

You can book a place at the Governor Conference through the [Governor Hub](#).







## NEW BOOK BY FORMER CAMDEN HEAD PUBLISHED

**The A-Z of Primary Maths by Kate Frood, just published by John Catt Educational, is an alphabetical celebration and compendium of great ideas for teaching mathematics.**

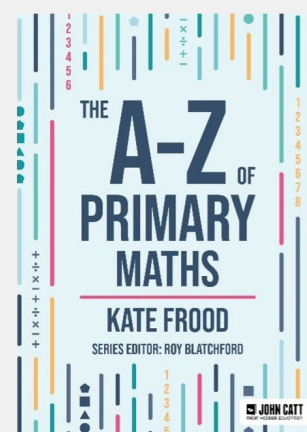
Alongside the fundamentals, Kate's chapters bring alive the fun of the teaching and learning of mathematics in primary years.

The book combines Kate's broad knowledge of the education system with a clear-headed assessment of the challenges those teaching primary maths face. She draws on her rich experience as a teacher and leader to realise that mathematics is a tool to make complicated things simple, not the other way around.

Former headteacher Kate, who retired from Eleanor Palmer Primary School in Lupton Street in 2021, said: *"Maths foundations must be built in our primary schools. We need to create space for children to play with numbers, to explore patterns, to solve problems, and to laugh and chat in maths lessons. It's this start that will build a lifelong love of and confidence in maths."*

The book is split into two sections. Section One is ordered under the A-Z alphabetical headings, exploring everything from 'Assessment' and 'Big' to 'Jenga' and 'Yes!'. Section Two presents further material for professional development that stems beyond books about teaching. At the end of each chapter in Section One are 'Asides', examples of questions, guides and approaches to provide further food for thought.

Since 'retiring', Kate has worked in school improvement across London, and we are delighted she has spent much of that time with us in Camden Learning, where she has done a brilliant job in leading the programmes for Early Career Teachers (ECTs) and National Professional Qualifications Frameworks (NPQs). She was appointed OBE in 2017 for services to education.



# NEW GUIDANCE: WORKING TOGETHER TO SAFEGUARD CHILDREN (2023)

In December the Department for Education (DfE) published a new version of '[Working Together to Safeguard Children](#)'. The updated guidance is central to delivering on the strategy they set out earlier last year in '[Stable Homes, Built on Love](#)'.

'Working Together 2023' is statutory guidance on multi-agency working to help, protect and promote the welfare of children and agencies must follow its contents.

In a new first chapter, the guidance sets out that all those involved in working to safeguarding children must adopt a child-centred approach that works in partnership with parents/carers. In doing this the guidance sets out four principles that must underpin any work with parents/carers.

These are:

- **Establishing effective partnerships**, with an emphasis on creating strong, positive, trusting and cooperative relationships.
- **Respectful communication** that maintains respectful, non-blaming and inclusive verbal and non-verbal communication, which is tailored to meet the needs of parents and carers.
- **Empowerment in decision-making** by providing them with the necessary information, updates and signposting towards additional resources to enable parents/carers to feel that they can participate in decisions to help, support and protect their children.
- **Involvement in design and planning** that ensures parents/carers are actively involved in shaping the processes and services that impact them.

Governors and school leaders must ensure that when it comes to working with parents/carers that their school's policies, procedures and practice are consistent with the principles set out in Chapter 1.

Chapter 1 also establishes new expectations for strategic leaders, senior/middle managers and direct practitioners in respect of multi-agency working. These expectations apply to everyone involved in safeguarding and protecting children, including those working in schools and education settings. At each level these expectations are built around five principles, which are:

- Sharing the same goals
- Learn with and from each other
- Have what they need to help families
- Acknowledge and appreciate difference
- Challenge each other

Governors and school leaders must ensure that they, and their staff, are familiar with these new expectations and what they mean for school and individual practice.

There are also several other changes in the new guidance that will affect the organisational arrangements and practice of social care and other agencies.

Chairs of governors and lead safeguarding governors should familiarise themselves with the new guidance, but as a minimum should read Chapter 1 and the [summary of the changes](#) produced by the DfE. This will provide governors with an understanding of the principles for working with parents/carers and the expectations on professionals as well as an overview of the wider changes that have taken place.

The table below outlines the expectations with regard to multi-agency working:

	<b>Strategic leaders</b>	<b>Senior/middle managers</b>	<b>Direct practitioners</b>
<b>Collaborate</b>	Leaders develop a shared vision for how their services work together to deliver shared goals.	Decisions are based on a shared practice approach and constructive debate and analysis of information from all services.	Practitioners working with the same child and family share information to get a complete picture of what life is like for the child. Collectively, they ensure the child's voice is at the centre and the right support is provided.
<b>Learn</b>	Leaders use evidence from direct practice in their area so that they know and can evaluate what is and isn't working well for children and families.	Managers ensure their teams have time to engage in peer learning and knowledge exchange, peer audit, group supervision and observation.	Practitioners learn together by drawing on the best available evidence from their individual fields and sharing their diverse perspectives during regular shared reflection on a child's development, experiences, and outcomes.
<b>Resource</b>	Leaders are ambitious about helping, supporting, and protecting children in their area and jointly prioritise and share resources accordingly.	Managers ensure children receive the holistic support they need, drawing in expertise from a wide range of agencies.	Practitioners build strong relationships across agencies and disciplines to ensure they support and protect the children with whom they work.
<b>Include</b>	Leaders create an inclusive culture where diversity is understood, and multi-agency and multi-disciplinary working is celebrated.	Managers support staff to identify and challenge discrimination, disparity, and negative stereotypes.	Practitioners recognise the differences between, and are confident to respond to, circumstances where children experience adversity due to economic and social circumstances and acute family stress, and situations where children face harm due to parental abuse and neglect.
<b>Mutual challenge</b>	Leaders create an inclusive culture where diversity is understood, and multi-agency and multi-disciplinary working is celebrated.	Constructive challenge within and across agencies and disciplines is actively encouraged, independent judgements are valued and given space alongside collective decision-making to avoid groupthink.	Practitioners challenge themselves and each other, question each other's assumptions, and seek to resolve differences of opinion in a restorative and respectful way.

# YOUNG GOVERNORS' PROGRAMME

Camden Learning is set to partner with Governors for Schools to attract younger recruits to the role of governing.

Our survey evidence shows that governors are disproportionately older, we believe there is a role for a greater number of young people to be involved in school governance. The hope is they will bring their different world view and life experiences to the table.

Shekeila Scarlett, a Chair of Governors at just 26, who features in this month's diversity update, is a graduate of the Hackney Young Governors' Programme, which has matched younger people aged 18-25 with governing bodies as associate members.

The programme will include a dedicated entry into governance, followed by regular support and mentoring. We will be discussing the programme further at our next Chairs' Network on 8 March, with recruitment of young people underway before the end of the spring term.



**NEWSLETTER NO 15 WILL BE PUBLISHED IN APRIL 2024**



Ideas for items all welcome, please send to:  
[christine.gilbert@camdenlearning.org.uk](mailto:christine.gilbert@camdenlearning.org.uk),  
[hana.emami@camden.gov.uk](mailto:hana.emami@camden.gov.uk)