

Camden Learning GOVERNORS' NEWSLETTER



GOVERNORS' TRAINING

CLERKS' BRIEFING

Wednesday 11 September 2024, 4:00 pm



NATIONAL GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION CHAIRS' DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Monday 16 September 2024, 6:00 pm



CAMDEN GOVERNORS' BRIEFING

Thursday 26 September 2024, 6:00 pm



HEADTEACHER AND STAFF PAY AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Thursday 3 October 2024, 6:00 pm



OFSTED FOR GOVERNORS

Wednesday 9 October 2024, 6:00 pm



ATTENDANCE

Monday 14 October 2024, 6:00 pm



MANAGING AN EXECUTIVE HEADTEACHER

Tuesday 22 October 2024, 6:00 pm



GLOBAL MAJORITY GOVERNOR NETWORK

Wednesday 23 October 2024, 6:00 pm



A MESSAGE FROM TIM ALDRIDGE

I'm delighted to have been asked to write this blog – which is my first contribution to the Governor's Newsletter! My name is Tim Aldridge, and I'm the Executive Director for Children and Learning. I've been in this role since August 2023, but it's not my first time working in Camden.

I want to start by sharing with you how much I value the contribution of all the school governors across Camden – schools are at the centre of our community in Camden and I know that the work you do has a significant positive impact on children, families, residents and local communities – I am certain that Camden is a much better place thanks to everything that you do.

I am a social worker by profession, and I started my career in Camden nearly 25 years ago. I was away for ten years, working in three other local authorities, and I've been a Director of Children's Services for over 7 years. It is great to be back in Camden, for many reasons, one of which is the quality of our schools, which is in no small part thanks to all of you. I am especially impressed with the way in which schools work together, and there are examples of collaboration here that I don't think are commonplace elsewhere. It's only when I've returned to Camden that I realise just how special and unique our area-based partnership is.

Over the last ten months I have really enjoyed meeting with headteachers and school governors, visiting schools and meeting children and young people. I've been so impressed with the schools I've seen and the amazing work that teachers and support staff deliver – particularly the commitment to inclusion, and the work to support children with complex needs and those experiencing adversity. Highlights include attending the primary schools choir event in March and visiting the Art Biennale last week.

I know that schools, headteachers and governors face some very significant challenges at present, including the concerns about falling roles, managing budgets, retaining teachers, responding to the cost of living crisis, and supporting children with special educational needs. I am acutely aware of the importance of working together, across schools, Camden Learning and the Council to respond to these challenges. I

know that Camden has a strong tradition of finding innovative solutions to shared problems, and these solutions often can only be developed through collaboration.

I spoke at a recent Children and Learning staff event about the importance of connection and relationships between teams and services, and across the wider partnership. To create a system with both high support and high expectations, I think it's vital that we invest in building relationships of trust that enable us to confront challenges and work on new solutions together. Across Children and Learning, we are developing a Relational Leadership approach – which means leading with honesty, openness and courage, demonstrating vulnerability and kindness. We've appointed a Director of Relational Practice, Nana Bonsu, to develop this approach further. This is going to be crucial in how we strengthen our working relationships with schools, particularly as we develop a neighbourhood approach to supporting families.

I am conscious that we don't always get things right, and there are areas where we need to work more rapidly to provide support to schools and recognise the scale of the challenges that schools are facing. Over this last year there has been a strong focus on the SEND system in Camden and understanding both the strengths and the gaps in the provision across the local partnership. Vikram Hansrani (Director of Education Commissioning and Inclusion) and Di Osbourne (Head of SEND and Inclusion) have overseen a self-evaluation and needs assessment of the services across the local area. We are in the process of reviewing the SEND service and considering additional investment to strengthen the offer to children and schools. This is alongside other

initiatives, including the access to capital for schools to support inclusion, and an expression of interest for schools seeking closer collaboration to develop their SEND provision through a 'test and learn' approach.

The council and Camden Learning are working with a number of schools that are most effected by falling rolls, and the consequent impact on school budgets. It's fair to say that there are no simple or easy solutions to this challenge that is affecting many schools across London. We will continue to engage with governors and head teachers on this issue, and there is a specific pupil place planning group to develop options to respond to this issue. It is important that we look at the challenge of falling rolls and SEND together to open up the possibilities of developing creative solutions.

As we approach the summer break, I hope that you get some well-earned rest. There will be further opportunities to collaborate in the next school year, and I look forward to visiting more schools across the borough, and learning more about the role that governors play in transforming children's lives.



Tim Aldridge
Executive Director for Children and Learning

BLOOMSBURY AUTHOR SMRITI HALL VISITS CAMDEN SCHOOLS

In July seven Camden schools enjoyed their third author visit this year from Bloomsbury Publishing as part of the our Every Child Reading by 7 (ECR7) initiative.

Smriti Hall shared her lovely book 'The Very Best Hug' with Year 1 and 2 classes at Argyle, St Albans, Brookfield, Edith Neville, Netley, Christopher Hatton and St Mary's and St Pancras schools.

The event proved a great hit and there were some fabulous comments from the children.

As far as one Year 1 St Albans pupil was concerned, *"the best hugs are from unicorns"*.

Another said author visits were fun because the stories are *"always funny and sometimes cheeky"*.

A teacher from St Albans added: *"We have loved welcoming the authors in this year. It has had a huge impact on the children's interest in books."*

We are delighted that Bloomsbury Publishing is set to continue its support next year and will take on an extra three schools. Together we will get every child reading!

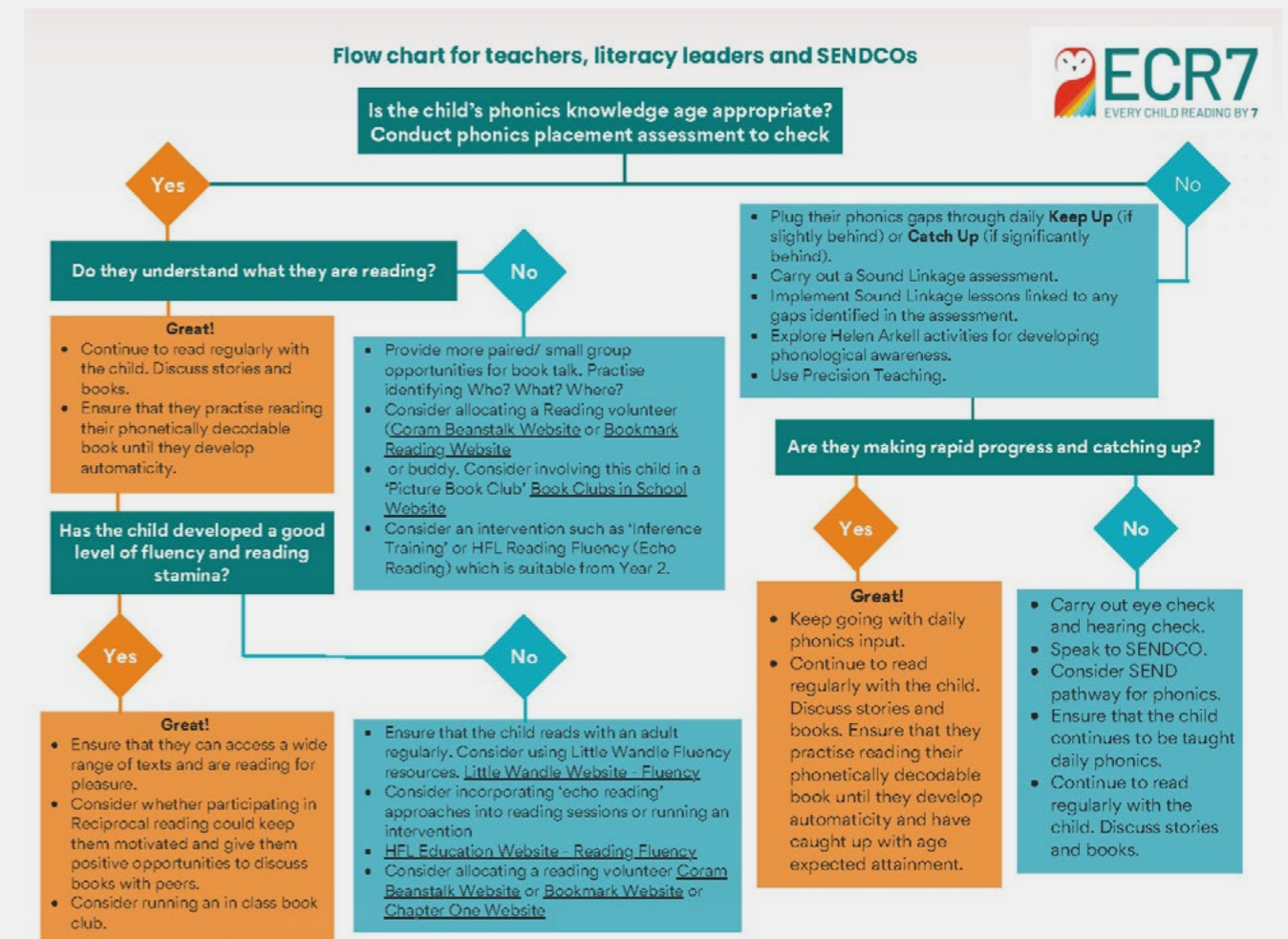
EVERY CHILD READING BY 7 – A SUCCESSFUL YEAR

This year's Every child reading by 7 (ECR7) professional development sessions came to an end with three well received events – a final 'Removing Barriers to Reading' session at The British Library, a packed event for primary and secondary SENDCOs (special educational needs coordinators) and a specially commissioned session for Year 7 colleagues.

Each event shared the ECR7 flowchart for Key Stages 1 and 2, which set out for all practitioners how to support children who may be experiencing difficulties in learning to read. It talked through some of the most effective interventions and gave an important reminder that, no matter the age of the child, sometimes the place to start is with an assessment of phonics and a plugging of any gaps there.

Secondary teachers were talked through case studies of three children who will need ongoing reading support in Year 7 and SENDCOs were given the opportunity to see a live 'inference training' intervention session in action.

The highlight of the 'Removing Barriers to Reading' twilight event was a fantastic storytelling session by The British Library- which emphasised the power and importance of storytelling.



CAMDEN CHILDREN'S RIGHTS STEERING GROUP MEETS

Camden Learning recently hosted its first child rights steering group meeting as part of a London-wide approach promoted by the Mayor of London.

This group will work with a UNICEF professional adviser to promote children's rights across the borough and to adopt the Rights Respecting principles in schools.

The initiative includes the Rights Respecting Schools Award (RRSA), a free improvement programme which provides a framework to embed children's rights strategically and practically into a school context. It requires children (as rights holders) and adults (as duty bearers for child rights) to know and understand the rights set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Rights Respecting framework is already being used by some Camden schools and our Camden Conversation last term reported on a study of some of this work in practice in Camden, including the impact of embedding Rights Respecting principles on pupil behaviour, wellbeing and a reduction in prejudice and discriminatory attitudes.

In all four Camden schools that took part in the study, the RRSA work runs throughout the curriculum, rather than being an 'add-on' reserved for discussions in PSHE or citizenship lessons. The schools have used the rights as a starting point for teaching children about challenging topics. At Torriano and Brecknock schools this has included the Windrush scandal and the impact of discrimination.

The steering group has set out its purpose and terms of reference as:

- Promote children's rights across the borough and adoption of Rights Respecting principles in schools within their locality
- Work with UNICEF UK's professional adviser to promote and monitor the uptake to RRSA across the borough
- Promote collaboration among schools through hosting sharing events where schools can showcase their approach to promoting children's rights, including RRSA
- Participate and organise cross-borough events to showcase different approaches to promoting children's rights, including RRSA

Membership of the group has been drawn from school leaders, inclusions leads, council officers and members of Camden Learning's inclusion team. The UNICEF professional adviser is supporting the development of the group and the assessment process for RRSA. They are also providing guidance and support for schools signing up, as well as existing schools. From the second year, members of the group will be expected to take on an assessor role, supported and trained by the professional adviser.

The group elected Katy Forsdyke, headteacher at Christ Church Primary School, Hampstead, as chair and will provide regular updates as work gathers pace.

Although young people's participation in the RRSA can contribute to a range of positive outcomes, there is an explicit link to Camden's Building Back Stronger education strategy and the ambition for young people to leave school as 'socially and morally responsible changemakers, who not only understand their rights and respect the rights of others but are also able to contribute actively to their community and to the planet'.

Participation is also aligned with Camden Learning's 'curriculum plus' enrichment pledge. One of its twelve promises is to give every pupil in a Camden school the opportunity to 'understand and feel part of a global and diverse world'.

Impact **evidence** also shows that children and young people who know about their rights are more inclusive of others and actively promote and celebrate diversity in all its forms – 93% of headteachers report some noticeable or significant impact on children and young people having 'improved respect for themselves and for others'.

To register or find out more about the Rights Respecting framework please [click here](#).



Why might this be right for your school?



Are you already spending time doing any or all of these things?

Supporting children to take action to protect the environment	Encouraging and listening to pupils' views	Celebrating diversity and difference and working on anti-discrimination
Promoting inclusion for all	Supporting pupils' physical and mental health	Encouraging children to make a difference to the world around them
Promoting positive relationships founded on dignity and respect	Helping pupils feel safe and to know who to go to if they need support	Teaching pupils to navigate and understand current affairs and world news



Children's rights

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CELEBRATING BLACK CULTURE AT ELEANOR PALMER SCHOOL

Eleanor Palmer has held its Celebrating Black Culture (CBC) night, an annual event to celebrate diversity, allyship and – one of the primary school's core values – belonging.

This year's event highlighted African and Caribbean culture, history and contributions, recognising the expanse of culture and innovation that has provided global influence and inspiration.

The theme was 'This is Africa' and the community – led by a group of parents, including governors Andrea Bara Bara, Sei-Kee Maturine and Nanouche Umeadi – arranged a wonderful programme of performances and activities including face painting, hair braiding & Djembe drumming tutorials.

The Sisters of CBC organised an abundance of international food, including Ethiopian coffee, traditional Eritrean cuisine, jolloff rice, rice and peas and delicious jerk chicken. In addition, the school's resident DJ Wisdm set the vibe with traditional music from calypso and soca to afro beats.

Local Black businesses supported the event and Camden councillor Sabrina Francis joined the celebration.

Sei-Kee Maturine said: *"A unique group of parents come together year on year to arrange this event to Celebrate Black Culture. I am delighted to be a part of such a special event and group; it is testimony to the hard work, creative ideas and collective voices of the CBC group."*

The value of the event was summed up by three Year 5 pupil.

Kayla said: *"CBC celebrates all the differences in our races."*

Sara added that it was *"great for learning more about Black culture whilst having fun at the same time"*.

And for Libby it felt *"like we are fixing mistakes from the past and building a better future"*.



PROMOTING THE ROLE OF GOVERNORS TO DIVERSE GROUPS

We were out promoting the role of governors to diverse groups at two events this term.

Firstly, we had a stall at the Windrush event in Kentish Town and met lots of enthusiastic people who were interested in becoming governors, with some even being interviewed for Instagram!

Secondly, we were at the Camden Mela on 14 July, with our brand-new sign.

We have a big and growing pool on supporters on the Governor Hub, so please make sure that your governing body is making the most of some really talented people.



IMPROVING SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH SCHOOL UNIFORM EXCHANGES

Rhyl Primary School explains how it has used a uniform swap and exchange scheme to combat climate change and save families money...

School uniforms can play a big part in 'poverty proofing' the school day as pupils wear the same clothes. However, uniforms can place a significant financial burden on parents and carers, particularly if they are only available from specialist shops.

Nicky, a parent volunteer at Rhyl primary in Kentish Town has meticulously run the uniform exchange scheme with the help of staff and other parents.

"Parents and carers donate uniforms that their children no longer use, so that others can come to get what they need for free," she explains.

"It's really helping families to feel supported, especially during the cost-of-living crisis. I'd encourage other schools and parents to start an exchange. Reusing good quality

uniforms, clothing and shoes helps ease the financial pressures on parents and it's good for the planet too!"

Over a million school uniforms are thrown away every year, but Rhyl's reused items alone have prevented 198.44 kg of CO2 emissions and provided a total cost saving of over £2,000!

"It really doesn't take much to set [an exchange scheme] up and parents are engaged and want to make it a success," says Rhyl's Family Support Worker Zara.

"You could run yours in the playground after school or ask the school reception to offer you a space inside at drop-off."

Rhyl parent Zarah adds: *"It's really handy for families like mine. My son has grown out of his trousers so quickly, so it's great that I've been able to get some bigger ones here."*

Camden's uniform exchange programme lead, Dolly, would like to support interested schools (primary and secondary) to either improve their swaps scheme or help set up a programme if they aren't already in place.

Contact dolly.akin-agnunbiade@camden.gov.uk for tailored support, a toolkit of resources to help you get started and funding for storage, clothing rails, sew-on badges and more.



STEAM WORK EXPERIENCE WEEK

This month students from all ten Camden secondary schools took part in STEAM Work Experience Week, with a record 408 placements offered – over 100 more than last year.

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Placements are offered across 27 Camden employers, including AstraZeneca UK, University College London, AutogenAI and Google. Thanks to your schools for their active participation and enabling students to benefit from accessing world-leading organisations in Camden.

The purpose of STEAM work experience is to promote and inspire young people into Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths (STEAM), raising awareness of the early career opportunities and reaching a more diverse and inclusive early careers population. Students eligible for free school meals are prioritised for placements.

Feedback from last year showed that 94% of the young people who participated said they acquired new skills that they wouldn't have learnt at school or through other activities. Most young people have also mentioned collaboration, teamwork, problem-solving and presentation skills as something they have been able to practice during their placements.

We look forward to hearing from students about their experiences this year and to sharing their stories with you.



YOUNG GOVERNOR PROGRAMME

Our Young Governor Programme has completed recruitment with a large and diverse cohort ready to join governing bodies from September.

The programme, which is being managed by Governors for Schools, will recruit, train and support a group of governors under 30, supporting them through a one year placement as an associate member.

We will be matching young governors with governing bodies over the summer, ready for action in September.

We have had a great response but if your governing body would like to host a Young Governor, please contact Owen Rees at owen.rees@camden.gov.uk.



BOROUGH'S FIRST ART BIENNALE PUTS CAMDEN PUPILS FRONT AND CENTRE

A new Camden Schools Art Biennale hosted by Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts London, in partnership with Camden Council and Camden Learning, came to Granary Square, King's Cross.

Running from 11 to 17 July at the Lethaby Gallery in Central Saint Martins, visitors explored hundreds of artworks by Camden schoolchildren in an exhibition which showcased art developed by every school and every key stage of learning – from primary and special schools to secondary schools, through to A-level.

In the lead-up to the exhibition, artists engaged directly with schools, pupils and teachers to develop their work for the borough's first Art Biennale.

The free event was hugely popular with over 5000 visitors throughout the week. The Biennale will be further developed as an ongoing sister-event to the much-loved Camden Schools Music Festival, which sees every music class in Camden perform at the Royal Albert Hall every two years.

Alongside the exhibition, a free events programme was on offer, with a range of activities developed with families, young people, and art teachers in mind.

The aim of the programme was to strengthen and inform the teaching of art in Camden schools and beyond, showcasing Camden as a centre of arts in the UK.



The programme will also work to develop links between schools, arts organisations and businesses, raise students' awareness of careers in art, design and creative practice as well as celebrate the diversity and creativity of all of Camden's young people including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and those from underserved backgrounds.

The pilot initiative was hosted by Camden Council, Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts London and Camden Learning, with support from King's Cross Central Limited Partnership and John Lyon's Charity.



EDITH NEVILLE PRIMARY SCHOOL- LOOKING BACK AT STEAM 2024

During the summer term our whole school's learning theme was 'Planet Earth' with all the children taking part in a STEAM project leading into our STEAM Fair.

The fair is a showcase of all the learning, research and investigations which have taken place to lead into an outcome to tackle climate change and pollution. This year's event included a sustainable fashion show, a 'Captain Planet' rap and various presentations and interactive games that the children had made.

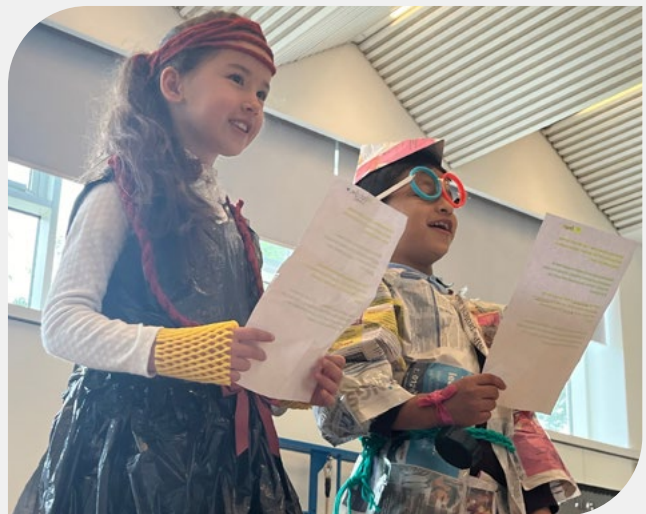
Different year groups investigated different factors affecting climate change, the impact on Earth and, in particular, how this affects different animals.

Year 1 learnt about plastic pollution harming wildlife in the local area and how they can improve the local biodiversity. They did this through researching, designing and making birdfeeders.

Children in Year 2 focused on plastic pollution impacting life below water- visiting the canal, they created graphs of all the litter they saw. Drawing on inspiration from the sustainable fashion designer, Wan Yunfeng, they designed and made their own recycled outfits and showed them off in a STEAM Exhibition fashion show.

Years 3 and 4 worked with the Whale and Dolphin Conservation to learn more about how these animals are threatened by pollution in rivers and seas. Year 3 then used all their learning to design an effective 'seabin' to collect rubbish in the sea, whilst Year 4 designed and created their own water filtration devices.

And Year 5 looked at climate change from a global perspective, making a journey to the Antarctic. After lots of research and investigations, they worked together to design shelters for scientists to live and work there to support further understanding of the impact of climate change in the region and the ripple effect this has on the rest of the world.



NEWSLETTER NO 17 WILL BE PUBLISHED IN OCTOBER 2024.

Ideas for items all welcome, please send to:
christine.gilbert@camdenlearning.org.uk, hana.emami@camdenlearning.org.uk

