

Camden Learning

GOVERNORS' NEWSLETTER



GOVERNORS' TRAINING

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

Thur, 20 April 23

18:00 - 20:00



Via
Zoom

CLERKS' BRIEFING

Tue, 25 April 23

16:00 - 18:00



Via
Zoom

HEALTH AND SAFETY FOR GOVERNORS

Wed, 3 May 23

18:00 - 20:00



Via
Zoom

GOVERNOR INDUCTION 1: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Thur, 4 May 23

18:00 - 20:00



In
Person

KEEPING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SAFE: SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION FOR SCHOOL GOVERNORS

Tue, 9 May 23

18:00 - 20:00



Via
Zoom

GOVERNOR INDUCTION 1: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Thur, 11 May 23

10:30 - 12:30



In
Person

HOW TO BE AN EFFECTIVE CHAIR

Thur, 11 May 23

18:00 - 20:00



Via
Zoom

TACKLING INEQUALITIES: GOVERNORS' ROLE IN ENSURING HIGH QUALITY OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS WITH SEND

Mon, 15 May 23

18:00 - 20:00



Via
Zoom

GOVERNORS' FORUM

Thur, 18 May 23

18:00 - 20:00



Via
Zoom

GOVERNORS' CONFERENCE

Sat, 20 May 23

09:30 - 13:00



In
Person

EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

Wed, 24 May 23

18:00 - 20:00



Via
Zoom

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

I know many of you have mixed feelings about the strikes that have taken place over the last couple of months. You don't want children to be suffering yet more disruption to their education but you sympathise too with the pressures you are seeing on committed and hard-working staff.

Pay is the prime reason behind the strikes but teaching is a tough job and teachers are also feeling the pressures of tighter school budgets and the difficulties of finding specialist teachers and support staff too. As governors, you will know how hard staff work. I was in a staffroom last week when teachers were discussing the time they had spent on school work over the weekend. This ranged from three to 13 hours.

The fallout from the pandemic has been significant with the pressures felt more in some schools than others. The unequal learning gaps created by the pandemic grow ever more obvious. So too does the impact of financial pressures on schools and families. Many schools are also struggling to increase pupil attendance and indeed, headteachers are telling us that staff attendance figures have not returned to pre-lockdown levels.

All this means that schools need your support more than ever and are grateful for it.

One of the strikes clashed with World Book Day and most schools simply moved their celebration to another day in that week. Many of you will have been impressed not only by the many fantastic costumes seen in schools but also by the exciting range of book-related events that were organised - such as Brookfield's activities with Patrick Kane described in this newsletter. These all celebrated the magic of books. We want as many children as possible and as soon as possible to experience the joy of reading. As highlighted in *Building Back Stronger*, reading is an important building block for academic success but also for ensuring fulfilling and rewarding lives. It has therefore been terrific to see our aspiration of *Every child a reader by 7* translating so practically into plans and activities. My thanks to Kathy Bannon, headteacher of Richard Cobden Primary School, for generating interest and momentum with speed.

As mentioned in a previous newsletter, following the publication of the White Paper back in March last year and the introduction of the Schools Bill, Camden Council commissioned some work to think about the possible responses to potential government changes, in particular the proposal of a fully academised system by 2030. Schools and Camden Learning were fully involved in this initiative. As it became clearer that the Schools Bill was going to be dropped and there seemed little momentum behind the White Paper, the Camden groups looking at future options shifted their attention to more local challenges. They focused on how we might help address the consequences of the continuing fall in pupil numbers and pressures on school budgets by giving greater support to collaboration that leads to more structural partnerships.

The draft statement on structural partnerships below has been produced to clarify the direction of travel set out in *Building Back Stronger* for a collaborative and federating system. Do take time to discuss it with your headteacher and feedback your views.

With good wishes

Christine

Chair, Camden Learning
christine.gilbert@camdenlearning.org.uk



TOWARDS GREATER COLLABORATION AND STRUCTURAL PARTNERSHIPS

***Building Back Stronger* set a clear ambition that Camden should be “A collaborative and federating system where we use collaboration to motivate, learn and achieve better, taking collective responsibility for all our children, working together in partnerships, including federations, so they are served well”.**

We have been considering how Camden Council and Camden Learning might work more closely with schools to build this system. The continuing fall in pupil numbers, combined with rising costs for both staff and buildings have given this agenda even greater urgency. Headteachers and governors have asked for clarity about the direction of travel and the support they can expect to help them build more collaborative structural partnerships. In collaboration with representatives from schools, Camden Council and Camden Learning have therefore developed a position statement on collaboration and structural partnership working. By this we mean formal partnerships that might include sharing staff and resources, and which may also include shared leadership and governance. The statement is set out on the right.

To help us understand how best we can help schools to explore and realise the benefits of more structural forms of partnership working, we have also devised a survey for schools. Additionally, we want to understand what the current appetite among school leaders in Camden is for working in more structural partnerships, recognising that this will not be the right path for all schools.

This survey is relevant for all schools in Camden, whether they are LA maintained schools, VA or VC schools or academies.

The survey should take no more than 15 minutes to complete. We are encouraging headteachers to complete it following a discussion with governors so that the response reflects the view of the school's leadership and governing body. The survey is being sent to schools this week with a return deadline of 30 April 2023.

Comments on the draft statement are very welcome and it will be discussed with governors at the Governors' Forum which will be held from 6pm to 8pm on Thursday, 18 May. The meeting will be held in person at Camden Council's offices in 5 Pancras Square, London, N1C 4AG. All governors are most welcome. When finalised, the statement will form the basis of discussions on structural partnerships with individual schools.



PLEASE SEND ANY COMMENTS YOU HAVE ON THE STATEMENT TO:

Hana Emami
hana.emami@camden.gov.uk

DRAFT STATEMENT

- In *Building Back Stronger* we promised to make a good local school place available for every child. To achieve this, we will need to harness the strengths and capacity in our education system for the benefit of all, driving greater equality of opportunity for all children and young people in Camden. This imperative has become all the more urgent in the face of the destabilising pressures of falling pupil numbers, rising costs and reduced funding.
- Collaboration is part of the DNA of Camden, and Camden Learning is the vehicle that supports it to take place. One of the four foundations of *Building Back Stronger* is “A collaborating and federating system” of which all schools in Camden are a part. There is significant work already underway on deepening collaboration between and within schools to improve practice. We will continue to drive and learn from this.
- Whatever the structural changes that might take place in Camden schools over the next five years, there is a commitment to maintaining Camden Learning as the glue that holds all schools in Camden together, whatever type of schools they are, as it does now.
- Collaboration can take many forms, from the development of ideas and practice through to more structural forms of partnership, with shared staff, leadership and governance. Federations, where more than one school share a single governing body, is one type of structural partnership.
- For some schools in Camden, financial and demographic pressures, as well as the increasing complexity of needs of some children and young people, have given a new urgency to the question of how to develop and sustain more structural forms of partnership working, within the wider context of meaningful collaboration. This is because working in a more structural form of partnership is one route to ensuring that schools maintain their quality and viability during these testing times, as it enables the sharing of staff and resources across more than one school.
- However, working in a structural partnership is not going to be the right approach for every school. Moreover, research tells us that structural partnerships often start with deep and purposeful collaboration, for the purpose of improving practice, and evolve into something different over time. We therefore cannot divorce our consideration of more structural forms of partnership working from our system-wide commitment to wider and deeper collaboration.
- In order to deliver the ambition set out in *Building Back Stronger* for a good local school place available for every child, Camden Council and Camden Learning will, together with the Dioceses, be working proactively with schools to ensure that leaders and governing bodies have planned for the future and in doing so have considered a range of structural partnership models that could deliver strength, quality and sustainability.
- In Camden, as elsewhere, the ultimate decision on how and with whom to partner rests with the governors of the individual schools. Camden Council and Camden Learning will be supporting schools to make these decisions based on the best available evidence and will work to ensure a degree of system coherence so that the partnerships established today provide a sound bedrock for future sustainability, and that no school is left behind.
- **Specifically, within the limits of existing resources, we will aim to:**
 - Support school leaders and governing bodies to scenario-plan for the future, particularly those whose needs seem greatest, to ensure their continued sustainability and viability.
 - Proactively broker and initiate discussions about structural partnerships between groups of schools in order to support a coherent, strategic and sustainable approach to the development of structural partnerships across the borough.
 - Create a bank of supporting resources for use by schools, such as template MOUs and resource sharing agreements that could be used in developing more structural forms of partnership working.
 - Support school leaders and governors to develop the skills and understanding needed to embed system leadership within a collaborating and federating system.
 - Keep a watching brief to ensure emerging partnerships are likely to enhance quality and promote sustainability and that all schools that wish to engage have an avenue to do so.



GLOBAL MAJORITY GOVERNORS NETWORK

The latest meeting of the network took place at St Luke's Community Centre in Islington.

There was a very good turnout from Camden governors and the session was chaired by Ammarah Hassan and Sarah Jafri from Richard Cobden Primary School, who did an excellent job with the still new and developing format.

The first area for discussion was school data with a focus on groups. The presentation by Stephen Hall from Camden Learning and Anthony Doudle from Islington Council prompted an interesting and challenging discussion on topics including how different groups were chosen for focus, the language used to describe groups whose outcomes were below their borough or national average and how governors could effectively challenge school leaders about underperformance.

This led well into the second item on recruitment to school leadership positions and how this affected schools' work. The discussion included how to recruit effectively and how to ensure that schools and governing bodies were inviting and inclusive environments. There was a vibrant debate on the best ways to achieve this and the role individuals could and should play in creating the right environment.

The next meeting of the network is on **8 June at 5 Pancras Square, London, N1C 4AG**. If you would like to attend, please book here.

Book [here](#)

A Governor Hub for the network is also being established, so please contact Owen Rees if you would like to join that.

CONTACT:

Owen Rees
owen.rees@camden.gov.uk

FULL STEAM AHEAD

Camden's new STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) strategy has been officially launched at an event attended by borough leader Georgia Gould and Mayor of London Sadiq Khan.

The venue was Google's HQ in King's Cross and other attendees included Google UK Vice President Product Management Cait O'Riordan and Chair of Camden STEAM Dinah Caine CBE.

The strategy aims to raise awareness of the STEAM industries in Camden, create more pathways for young people to enter and succeed in these careers and engage more students from underrepresented backgrounds in related training and opportunities.

It was developed by a board of leading STEAM employers in the borough, headteachers and Camden councillors, focusing on scaling up key initiatives including work experience, apprenticeships, and employer talks in schools. Partnerships with 30 employers have been secured, not only with large companies such as Google but also start-ups such as medical drone company Apian.



The programme works across the borough's sixty schools and colleges and highlights so far include:

- 1 450 work experience opportunities for Year 12 students at local employers such as **Google, Argent, Lendlease** and **Central Saint Martins**
- 2 A STEAM hub teacher network involving **35 schools**
- 3 A network of over **200 trained STEAM ambassadors** volunteering in school, ranging from architects and software engineers to designers and scientists, carrying out mock interviews with sixth formers
- 4 Initiatives led by employers including **Ted Baker, Meta** and **DeepMind**.

Camden Council leader Georgia Gould said: "As we come out of the pandemic and build back stronger, we are even more determined that all the young people growing up in Camden, regardless of background, have access to the very best opportunities that this borough has to offer to help them in future life. This new STEAM strategy will help us to achieve that and ensure we are an emblem of inclusive growth at the heart of London."

Camden STEAM's Chair Dinah Caine CBE, said: "This new strategy sets out our vision for close partnerships between employers, educators and young people, working together for a future where our scientific, creative and digital industries continue to innovate and flourish, providing opportunities for Camden's young people to have fulfilling careers."

The audience also heard from a panel including Sarah Creasey (Headteacher, Parliament Hill School); Jade Chau (Associate and Architect, Bennetts Associates); Jai Clarke-Binns (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Specialist, DeepMind); Phil McCormack (Director of Participation, Donmar Warehouse) and Irfath Islam (Year 13 student, The UCL Academy).

Irfath has taken part in a range of Camden STEAM initiatives, including a mentoring and leadership programme for girls with Meta and a work experience placement at Google. She was recognised by London Mayor Sadiq Khan for her excellent public speaking skills and passionate message about the impact experiences with employers have on young people.

Camden Learning's STEAM team aims to connect all year groups – from Early Years to Year 13 – in every Camden school with employer opportunities. Schools can contact us below for further support.

CONTACT FOR FURTHER SUPPORT:

steampledge@camden.gov.uk

For more information on the Council's STEAM programme visit the link below.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

www.camden.gov.uk/camden-steam.



Photos supplied by Sam Lane.

GOVERNOR CONFERENCE

Are you ready to sharpen your governance skills and to be inspired by educational leaders in Camden? If so, please join us for the second part of the Camden Learning Governor Conference on Saturday 20 May.

The conference will take place at Maria Fidelis Catholic School, Drummond Crescent, NW1 1LY, starting at 9.30am and concludes with a hot lunch to maximise networking with other governors.

It promises to be a valuable and informative event, which will equip you with the knowledge and tools needed for effective governance.

Stephen Hall, Camden Learning's Chief Executive Officer, will open the event and share a condensed version of his current Systems Leadership course. This is a topic of vital and growing importance.

There will then be a range of workshops designed to meet the needs of all Camden schools and governors. These will include:

- A workshop led by Orlene Badu on 'How to Build an Anti-Racist School'. The racial literacy expert will share insights from her book of the same name.
- A workshop focused on the impact of SEND reforms by Camden Learning's Senior SEND Adviser, Helen McNulty.

In addition, Gary Moore and Martin Stephen, Headteacher and Chair of Governors respectively at Regent High School, will share their experience of promoting attendance, including the governor's role in challenging and supporting a school.

Finally, there will be a presentation from partnerships as the essential ingredient for school success. Governors from CCfL and Haverstock will explain how they developed their partnership from inception to federation.

Please register by clicking below to ensure your attendance. We look forward to welcoming you on the day.

[Register here](#)



SCHOOLS WHICH PURCHASE THE GOVERNOR TRAINING PACKAGE ARE ENTITLED TO UNLIMITED SPACES.

THE IMPORTANCE OF UPDATING WEBSITES

Websites are the first thing that many people see about a school, including inspectors, so keeping them up to date is of vital importance.

We have updated our website checklist to reflect the latest requirements, with the most recent change being the inclusion of example wording for those publishing 2018-19 KS2 results.

Some tips and reminders for those using the checklist include:

- 1 Policies should indicate the date they were last reviewed as well as the date of the next review.
- 2 Model policies, including Camden ones, should be adapted to the school.
- 3 For clarity, avoid merging statutory policies (e.g. keep anti-bullying and behaviour separate and publish the equalities objectives separately to the equalities policy).
- 4 Use the same names for policies given in the statutory policy list.
- 5 Make sure names change in policies as staff do.

[View checklist on the Governor Hub here](#)



[View the department for Education's checklist here](#)



WORLD BOOK DAY VISIT TO BROOKFIELD BY PATRICK KANE

Children and staff at Brookfield Primary School were able to dress up as their favourite book characters and share their enthusiasm for reading. They were inspired by a visit from writer and motivational speaker Patrick Kane, whom they had invited to join them for World Book Day.

Patrick was just nine months old when he contracted meningococcal septicaemia leading to him becoming a triple amputee. In 2010, he was the first person in the world to be fitted with a revolutionary bionic arm. He went on to carry the Olympic torch through Trafalgar Square as part of the London 2012 Games, speak at TEDxTeen in 2014 and appear at WIRED Next Generation in 2015.

Patrick delivered an engaging assembly about his life and new book, **Human 2.0**. This looks at the leaps in medical engineering and the people he's met, including Paralympians Richard Whitehead and Blake Leeper, and the world's first 'cyborg' Neil Harbisson. It celebrates the history of human bionics, while exploring some of the decisions we will have to make in the future. Patrick says, 'it is aimed at children and curious adults alike' and it is 'a real privilege to have written the book that would have inspired me as a child'.

He is a powerful campaigner for disability rights and ambassador for both The UK Sepsis Trust and Touch Bionics.



The children asked some excellent questions on the day, including about his bionic arm and prosthetic leg. There was huge enthusiasm from the children who wanted to shake Patrick's hand as they left the assembly.



NEURODIVERSITY CELEBRATION WEEK

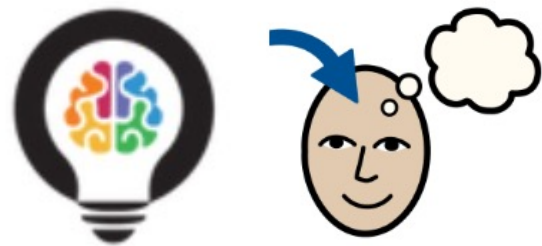
Neurodiversity Celebration Week is a worldwide initiative that challenges stereotypes and misconceptions about neurological differences. This means recognising that everyone's brain works differently so we all think, learn and process information differently.

The Celebration Week was 13-19 March and it was good to see some schools use it not only to raise awareness and understanding about neurodiversity but also to highlight what's positive about it. Thinking about things in a way that's different from the majority brings unique strengths, talents and perspectives.

Torriano and Brecknock Schools spent time celebrating people's unique strengths and differences. They talked about the way our brains are wired so that some of us may struggle to do things that others find easier. Some people also find things easy that other people struggle with.

Classes investigated the strengths and challenges of people with Autism, ADHD, Development Language Disorder (DLD), Tourette Syndrome, Dyspraxia and Dyslexia.

The children learnt about how these strengths and challenges have enabled many familiar people in science, entertainment and society to do amazing things.



**NEWSLETTER NO 10 WILL
BE PUBLISHED IN THE WEEK
BEGINNING 22 MAY 2023.**

Ideas for items all welcome, please send to:

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