

# Camden Learning

# GOVERNORS' NEWSLETTER



## GOVERNORS' TRAINING

### **GOVERNOR INDUCTION 2: THE EDUCATIONAL FRAMEWORK (CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT)**

Thur, 18 May 23  
18:00 - 20:00

Included in the Governor Training Package or available to purchase as a one-off



### **GOVERNOR INDUCTION 2: THE EDUCATIONAL FRAMEWORK (CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT)**

Thur, 25 May 23  
10:00 - 12:00

Included in the Governor Training Package or available to purchase as a one-off



### **BLACK, ASIAN AND GLOBAL MAJORITY GOVERNORS' FORUM**

Wed, 7 June 23  
18:00 - 19:45

Free to Camden Schools



### **COMPLAINTS, INVESTIGATIONS AND PANELS: BEST PRACTICE FOR GOVERNORS**

Thur, 22 June 23  
18:00 - 19:30

Included in the Governor Training Package or available to purchase as a one-off



### **PREVENT FOR GOVERNORS**

Tue, 27 June 23  
12:30 - 13:30

No charge to Camden schools



### **SECONDARY CHAIRS' NETWORK**

Thur, 29 June 23  
18:00 - 20:00

No charge to Camden schools



### **PRIMARY CHAIRS' NETWORK**

Tue, 4 July 23  
18:00 - 20:00

No charge to Camden schools



## A FINAL MESSAGE FROM THE DCS, MARTIN PRATT

How did that happen? One minute it's February 2014 and I am arriving in Camden to take up my dream job as your Director of Children's Services, the next I am preparing to retire! So, as this will be my last edition of the Governors' Newsletter, Christine has kindly offered to let me take her usual column to offer some reflections on the journey we've travelled together in the last nine years, and to talk about my hopes for the future of education in Camden.

I clearly remember my first morning in Camden, I had been informed on the previous Friday that a school which had been judged to require improvement at its previous inspection had been found to have made no progress six months later. I said that I would write to the Head and Chair of Governors with a notice to improve and ask them to come to see me. I was informed that 'we don't do that here' and before I could check myself, I'd said 'we do now...' Perhaps not the best way to endear myself to my new colleagues but I was clear about two things; the transformative power of education, especially for those children who are the most disadvantaged, and therefore the importance of school standards; and secondly, this is Camden, where the expectations of heads, teachers, governors, parents, and politicians are high. It means something to be a Camden school.

As I got to know the schools and communities it became increasingly clear that this was a very special place, a place with a commitment to schools belonging at the heart of their communities; each distinct but deeply connected to place and each other. Of course, this contrasted with the prevailing education policy narrative at the time which set out a rather different vision for schools.



I remember long discussions at the Governors' Forum (with Luca patiently in the Chair) about the way forward and the extent to which Camden could or should be different. From those discussions, and others with headteachers and school leaders emerged first the schools-led partnership and then Camden Learning. A remarkable system response which neither clings to the past nor blindly follows the pack, but a unique partnership between every state school in Camden and the Council (perhaps an example of Camden's famous 'rebellious spirit'). A collaborative approach to improvement and innovation in which schools of every type enjoy high levels of autonomy but choose to work together to achieve a shared purpose. Here I want to pay tribute to the governors, heads and politicians who had the vision and confidence to make it happen and to the Camden Learning staff and Board, so inspirationally chaired by Christine. Thank you all.

During the dark days of the pandemic the power of that relationship between schools and their communities and with each other was a lifeline for children and families. Our teachers and school staff were the true heroes of the hour. It was also a time when we turned our attention to the question of what Camden's education vision needed to be as we emerged from Covid-19. Not just questions of teaching and learning, important though they are, but about the purpose of a Camden education. The title of our education strategy says it all – Building Back Stronger. A vision built on the twin pillars of excellence and equity which pays attention to the detail of how those aims are to be achieved. It's a vision I feel proud to be associated with and I hope you feel the same.

There are of course fundamental challenges now and for the foreseeable future, not least the reduced number of children in London and indeed in Camden, leading to falling school rolls, and the increasing proportion of our children with additional needs. I am convinced that our

best response is to continue to work together to deliver the ambitions in Building Back Stronger, including our commitment to a 'collaborating and federating system' which I believe governors have a central role in delivering. We can sustain our proud tradition of having successful, inclusive, and ambitious schools but to do this we will need to adapt the way we lead and govern them.

At the recent school music festival at the Royal Albert Hall someone who has spent their whole career in education but is relatively new to Camden said to me that they didn't really understand what we meant by the 'Camden Family of Schools' until that moment, when she said, 'I get it, I've just seen it!' I hope many of you were there to share that wonderful evening, because for all our work on strategy and partnership, it is when you see the impact of our work in the lives of Camden's children, powerfully exemplified by the skill, exuberance, and joy on display at the Royal Albert Hall, that we all 'get it'.



So, I want to thank you for the crucial part you play as governors in making Camden a place where every child gets the best start in life and where it really means something to be a Camden school.

With deep gratitude and every best wish for the future.

**Martin**



## GOVERNORS' CONFERENCE

**The Camden Governors Conference is one of the times when it really feels like Camden's schools are a family. There was a strong turnout for Saturday's Part 2 (Part 1 was Shalina Patel's Keynote address in the autumn) and there was a buzz to the day that you just don't get on weekday evenings in February or on Zoom. Indeed, this was the first in-person conference since 2019, thanks to a combination of train strikes and Covid.**

The conference was opened by Marcus Boyland, Chair of Fleet Primary School (and Cabinet Member for Best Start in Life in his spare time), who introduced Stephen Hall, the CEO of Camden Learning. Stephen gave us a review of systems leadership, drawing on the recent series for school leaders. With great speed and clarity, Stephen outlined the principles and drivers behind successful partnerships, the different models available, and what partnerships meant for school leaders and governors. The key takeaway shared by governors was the need for all governing bodies to be planning ahead, to understand its own appetite for partnership working and the opportunities this might present.

The day continued with a series of workshops. Janet Grauberg and James Hadley presented on the journey of the H3 Federation (comprising Haverstock, Heath and Harmood). This set out the benefits they'd derived and the process (and the hard work) they'd been through. This dovetailed neatly with Stephen's talk on systems leadership, showing this in practical application. Governors showed great interest in the details of how the schools had got to the point of federating.

Gary Moore led a workshop on attendance on behalf of Regent High School's governors, setting out their hugely successful journey, their philosophy of high standards and how this was reflected in their recent Ofsted inspection, although inspectors had shown no interest in attendance itself. Attendance is a subject of crucial importance, with the effects of Covid disruption still evident locally and nationally and Regent High gave an energising and engaging take on the subject.

Orlene Badu's workshop on developing an anti-racist school was popular and well received. Orlene was insightful and passionate in describing the work that needed to be done to tackle systemic racism,

and how governors can move from a position of passive "non-racism" to active anti-racism. This is a subject that Camden Learning and Camden governors are passionate about, and this was evident in the enthusiasm and engagement of participants. We will be asking Orlene to come back and lead a longer session in the 23-24 calendar.

Finally, Helen McNulty presented on SEND in its current challenging context. Helen was, as always, insightful and expert in relating the national context to the local one, both within Camden and in individual schools. She set out what governors should be thinking about and challenging their schools on. Governors very much enjoyed her presentation.

All the presentations are now up on **Governor Hub**. Presentations can also be accessed through the following links:

- Orlene Badu**
- H3 Federation**
- Promoting attendance**
- SEND workshop**
- System Leadership**

If your school would be interested in presenting a workshop at a future conference, please contact [owen.rees@camden.gov.uk](mailto:owen.rees@camden.gov.uk).





## MUSIC EXTRAVAGANZA FOR CAMDEN SCHOOLS AT ROYAL ALBERT HALL

Pupils from 53 of the borough's schools took to the stage last month at the iconic Royal Albert Hall for the 13th Camden Schools Music Festival.

With an eclectic array of original, classical, jazz and international music, the event brought together pupils, families, teachers, musicians and composers for the first time since the Covid pandemic.

The centrepiece for this year's concert was 'Camden to the Caribbean', a newly composed piece created with children from a number of primary schools across the borough as part of a Windrush project.

Other standout performances at the event included the Camden Primary Choir using British Sign Language as they sang *Come On All Children* and Argyle and Edith Neville pupils singing and dancing to Bengali tune *Momer Putul*.

The festival was organised by Camden Council's music service, with support from the Camden Learning, the Camden Music Trust, Arts Council England and the London Music Fund.

Deborah Rees, head of the council's music service, said:

*"What a fantastic and inspirational event to take place on one of London's biggest stages.*

*Events like this add to Camden schools' rich curriculum and showcase the wonderful talent we have across our schools, enabling everyone to celebrate the importance of music in our schools and lives."*

For the first time, the festival was livestreamed so parents, carers, families and friends of children taking part who could not make it to the Royal Albert Hall were able to enjoy the experience.

The festival boasted 10 ensembles and a staggering 1,800 singers taking part. It was hosted by journalist and presenter Nelufar Hedayat, a former Ryhl and Haverstock pupil, who said she wanted to "personally thank" her music teacher for "saving my life".



## NEW H3 FEDERATION LAUNCHED

A new partnership between three Camden schools has launched this term which will see them sharing their expertise and ideas for the benefit of all their pupils.

The H3 Federation brings together Haverstock, Heath and Harmood schools. Heath and Harmood are the two schools which were previously known as the Camden Centre for Learning.

Each school will retain its own special character, budget and headteacher but come together to make the most of any potential efficiencies and ideas.

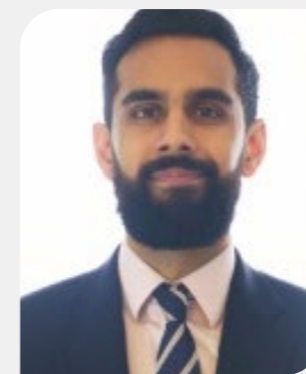
The initiative launched at the start of this term following a positive consultation response from students, parents, staff and the wider community.

Executive Headteacher James Hadley explains, "The single CCfL label which applied to both schools caused unnecessary confusion for the public, for parents and students, with some reporting that they didn't understand the difference between the two schools. In addition, our community told us they didn't like the 'CCfL' name. Students, in particular, feel strongly about wanting to attend a school rather than a 'centre' or 'unit'. Now with their clear new names and identities, it's much simpler to explain what's excellent about each of the schools within our H3 family."

H3 Federation Chair of Governors, Alison Lowton says: "This is a great move that will really widen access to services for all our children. Working closely together as a federation, we can offer opportunities beyond those which one single school can provide. Our new 16+ Level 1 programmes in Business and Construction are a fantastic example: the 3 schools worked closely to design a programme that offers the best of each school – pooling our specialisms in wraparound care and individual mentoring with tailor-made work experience and the very best teaching. It's just one example of how the partnership is already helping to support all our pupils and their families."

And Executive Headteacher James Hadley sums it up: "Our schools are made much stronger by working together as a collaborative family, retaining all the best elements of their independence while benefitting from each others' strengths. I'm very much looking forward to leading Haverstock, Heath and Harmood Schools on the next exciting stage of this journey as we power up with the H3 Federation."

## CAMDEN WELCOMES NEW COMMISSIONING AND INCLUSION DIRECTOR



Vikram Hansrani has this month taken up the post of Director of Education Commissioning and Inclusion at Camden Council.

He will provide strategic leadership across all the borough's education functions – from school place planning and finance to implementation of **Camden's Local Area Special Educational Need and Disability (SEND) Strategy**.

While much of the direct work with schools rests with Camden Learning, Vikram will be responsible for commissioning and monitoring our work and leading on all aspects of school organisation.

He will play a key role in delivering Camden's ambition for equity and excellence, which is at the heart of the **Education Strategy, Building Back Stronger**.

Previously Executive Director of Education and SEND at Hillingdon Council, Vikram has significant experience and a proven track record of delivering services to improve outcomes for children and young people.





## SCHOOL MODIFICATION FUND AVAILABLE

Schools are reminded that Camden Council's Special Provision Fund is available for modifying buildings to better accommodate children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

The council has already spent £350,000 through the fund to adapt classrooms and cloakrooms, as well as to create therapy rooms and reflective spaces for children with SEND.

To bid for funding schools just need to set out what they want to do, how this will benefit children with SEND and how much the adaptations will cost. Please email the request to [Sharon.Scott@camden.gov.uk](mailto:Sharon.Scott@camden.gov.uk).



## ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL SCHOOL OPENS NEW BASE IN HIGHGATE

The Royal Free Hospital Children's School (RFHCS) is set to move to the Konstam Centre in Chester Road this September.

With the plan now approved, it means more provision can be offered to young people in the borough unable to attend mainstream school.

The RFHCS is a community special school for pupils aged five to 16, providing education to patients on the paediatric wards at the Royal Free Hospital. It currently also runs programmes from two external sites – the Camden Learning Centre in Charrington Street and The Hive on Finchley Road – for children experiencing medical or mental health challenges.

Bringing the RFHCS's external work under one roof at the Konstam Centre will provide greater stability for this crucial service and allow the school to cater for up to 50 children and young people.

Alex Yates, RFHCS's headteacher, said the move would also enable the school to focus even more on meeting need.

Councillor Marcus Boyland, Camden Council's Cabinet Member for Best Start for Children and Families, said: "The RFHCS is an outstanding school offering vital provision for vulnerable children who are not able to attend a mainstream school, so it's fantastic that they will be able to operate on one site and increase their services for the benefit of even more children in the borough."

It comes after Brookfield Primary School opened its nursery for two-year-olds on the ground floor of the Konstam Centre in 2021 and this will continue to operate there when the RFHCS moves in.

Brookfield's headteacher Laurel Robin said: "Sharing the site will enable us to continue our successful nursery for two-year-olds, where the children make excellent transitions to our primary school. As an inclusive school, we are inspired to be working alongside the RFHCS and to collaborate on future projects together."



## GOVERNORS AND DIVERSITY

The DfE recently updated its advice on what Governing Bodies should publish online to state the following:

### Collecting and publishing governing board diversity data

- Diversity is important and we want governing boards to be increasingly reflective of the communities they serve.
- We encourage schools to collect and publish governing board members' diversity data. Information should be widely accessible to members of the school community and the public. Board members can opt out of sharing their information, including protected characteristics, at any given time including after publication.
- Schools must ensure that individuals cannot be identified through the publication of data, particularly when board member levels are low. Read more about this in the [data protection toolkit for schools](#) and [Equality Act 2010: advice for schools](#).
- There is no prescriptive way to collect diversity data from volunteers; this needs to be done on a voluntary basis. Schools may prefer to adopt a similar approach to how they collate the diversity data of pupils.

### This matches the Camden Council's 2030 ambition:

- By 2030, those holding positions of power in Camden are as diverse as our community – and the next generation is ready to follow.

Camden Learning is launching its third annual survey of Governing Bodies. The survey will run between 12 May and 19 June 2023, with results delivered to schools before the end of the academic year. As in the year just gone, these will include contextual data from the survey as a whole and from the school population.

Headteachers and governors are encouraged to **complete the survey**.

Full details are contained in the briefing note attached and on the [Governor Hub](#) folder. This includes information on privacy, including publication of information online.

[Download the briefing note here](#)



# RESEARCH SCHOOL SECURED TO BOOST TEACHING PRACTICE IN CAMDEN

**Torriano Primary School has secured £210,000 of national funding to form a new research school aimed at helping schools translate evidence into practice to improve teaching and learning in the borough and beyond.**

The funding will come from the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) and will see Torriano collaborate with secondary Parliament Hill and primaries Eleanor Palmer and Brecknock to form the North London Research School Alliance. The EEF is an independent charity dedicated to breaking the link between family income and educational achievement. It is the biggest funder of schools' research in England.

Starting in September, the funding will stretch over three years and support the schools to improve pupil outcomes. It will consist of a core annual grant to cover leadership time and staff development as well as training to support evidence-led practice.

The funding is part of EEF's new regional strategy, which has expanded the **research school** network nationally and aims to provide direct support around making, and acting on, evidence-informed decisions to schools with high levels of socio-economic disadvantage.

**Helen Bruckdorfer, Executive Headteacher for the Torriano and Brecknock Federation, said:** *"Torriano is incredibly proud to have been appointed as the lead school in the EEF North London Research School Alliance, in collaboration with Parliament Hill Secondary School. Strengthening the engagement with research evidence in our classrooms is something that we are truly passionate about. This passion is equally shared by our partners Eleanor Palmer and Brecknock schools. As an alliance, we are really excited about the opportunities this will bring for schools in North London. We aim to deepen collaboration and drive equity, with the ambition to further improve educational outcomes for our children."*

**Sarah Creasey, Headteacher, Parliament Hill School, said:** *"We are delighted to have been asked to collaborate with Torriano School in this innovative cross phase partnership. Bringing together primary and secondary teachers and leaders to share evidence-based approaches and expertise is a fantastic opportunity. Looking forward to working with other schools in Camden and North London more widely."*

**Professor Becky Francis, EEF's Chief Executive Officer, said:** *"It has never been more important to assist schools in engaging with evidence to inform their approaches to teaching and learning."*

*"These latest additions to the EEF's Research Schools Network offer the opportunity to establish new connections, through which schools across England will be able to share expertise and access practical tools, with the view to raising the attainment of all their pupils, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds."*



**NEWSLETTER NO 11 WILL BE PUBLISHED IN THE WEEK BEGINNING 10 JULY 2023.**

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

