



Camestone Lower School Governing Body

Autumn Term Newsletter 2015

Dear Parents & Carers,

We would like to briefly remind you of some of the achievements from last year and share our priorities for this academic year.

Achievements 2014/15

- The new national curriculum was implemented in years 1, 3 and 4. Year 2 are following the new curriculum this year in line with Government requirements.
- A new assessment framework (without levels) was also implemented in years 1,3 and 4 (year 2 is being implemented this year)
- Children in all year groups made good progress in Maths, Reading and Writing. (please see our Summer term newsletter- on the school website)
- Following a successful moderation visit, Foundation staff are sharing their 'best practice' with other LA schools.
- Leadership of the school was strengthened by the appointment of two Assistant Head Teachers (Mrs Merritt and Miss Ducker) to support Mr Stanyard as Headteacher.

Priorities for 2015/16

- To continue to raise the standards of reading across the whole school.
- To continue to raise the standards and progress of vulnerable pupils
- To embed the framework for assessment and monitoring across the school.
- To introduce the values based education programme
- To develop the new senior leadership structure and the role of middle leaders
- To consider and consult on 2 Tier education (conversion to Primary school)

Part of the Governing bodies role is to monitor progress towards these priorities

- **We monitor the progress of ALL children within the school.** To ensure we get a good all round picture we look at progress of different groups of children (year group, gender, key stage, vulnerable groups etc) and in different subjects (maths, reading, writing). This helps us to ensure that there are no groups of children that are being disadvantaged and ensures the school can implement new strategies to support groups if necessary.

- **We ensure the quality of teaching and learning is maintained throughout the school.** One of the ways we do this is through a series of focussed visits and meetings. This term we have:

- Discussed the outcome of Teaching and Learning Monitoring conducted by the Leadership team.
- Discussed Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Safeguarding.
- Attended various school activities including the Values launch and awards, Decoration Day and Christmas Performances

Below are some extracts from recent Governor Visit reports:

"There is an increased focus on classroom based intervention, which is more inclusive, and enables teachers to monitor interventions more closely"

"Brain awareness week had worked well with children settling down quickly into their new routines and environment".

"High level of focus from pupils and demonstration of independence skills"

"The children were keen to enter into confident discussions, share their experiences and were polite at all times."

- **We monitor all the school finances to ensure they are well managed** - This includes money that is received in the form of a grant. One of the main grants the school currently receive is the Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) - In 2014/15 our PPG allocation was £88300. The school is required to account for the expenditure in detail and measure the impact it has had in terms of pupil progress and achievement.

Pupil Premium is additional funding which is allocated to provide support for children from low-income families (traditionally those eligible for free school meals/milk) and children who have been looked after. Nationally on average attainment is lower in these children and therefore the funds are made available to help improve attainment for these groups.

Please read the full Pupil Premium Grant report available on the school website.

It is important to understand that within school these children are not singled out or treated differently from other groups of children. Support is available to ALL children based on need, it simply comes from a different fund.

We would encourage all parents who think their child may be eligible but not currently identified to contact the school office who will advise you of the criteria. All discussions with the school office will be treated as confidential.

Consultation for Conversion to Primary school

You will be aware that we are currently proposing to change the age range of the school to include the 9 -11 age group (upper Key Stage 2). If you have not already done so, we encourage you to complete the questionnaire that formed part of the proposal document sent home on 6th November. (also available on the school website). The consultation period ends at noon on 18th December.

Values Education

Following the spectacular Values balloon launch we are very proud to be involved in the presentation of the Values Awards at the end of each half term. In November Cllr Nawaz presented 11 children with awards for creativity at a special assembly. We look forward to celebrating 'togetherness' at the end of this term.

Other News

Attendance

Attendance is currently 96.18%. Whilst the majority can be explained by illness, there is still a significant amount of unauthorised absence.

From September the government changed the criteria for 'Persistent Absentees' from those whose attendance is less than 85% to attendance less than 90%. This has already had an impact on more Camestone parents. Pupils with an attendance below 92% are tracked weekly. If your child's attendance falls below 90% you will be asked to attend a meeting in school to discuss it, and if necessary, meet with the Bedford Borough Education Welfare Officer.

We ask all parents to ensure their child is in school, unless they are unwell. Poor attendance significantly impacts on your child's progress.

Volunteers

The Governing Body wish to take the opportunity to thank all the volunteers who support the work of the school.

- The PTFA committee who consistently provide enjoyable events for the whole school community and whose fundraising raised over £9700 last year.
- The volunteer gardeners who have tamed and maintained the outdoor classroom and outdoor spaces.
- Parents and WI Ladies who volunteer to listen to children read in school.
- All the parents/carers who are able help on school trips and support other events.

All of your contributions enhance the children's experiences and enable the school to provide an enriched education. Thank you.

Parental questionnaire update

A parental questionnaire was undertaken in July 2015 and as a result of your views we are:

- Reviewing our approach to home learning.
- Re-designing our school website to provide ongoing information about our curriculum.

Governing Body Business

In September we welcomed Mr Dave West back to the Governing Body. Dave has extensive knowledge of the school having previously been a parent governor for 7 years. He also brings experience of years 5 and 6 which will be an asset as we consider converting to Primary in 2017

Rebecca Silliker, Clerk to Governors, left in November. The Governing body are currently recruiting to fill the vacancy.

For 2015/16 the governing body is represented by the following members

Membership of the Governing Body			
Name	Capacity	Date Appointed	Role 2016/2017
Mrs Nicky Attenborough	Co-opted	Jan. 2015	Full Governing Body Meetings Governor Link for Foundation and Year 1
Ms Kay Burley	Co-opted	Jan. 2015	Finance, Personnel & Buildings Committee (Chair) Full Governing Body Meetings Governor Link for Years 2,3,4
Mrs Vicky Dobinson	Staff	Sept. 2013	Full Governing Body Meetings
Mr John Epton	Co-opted	Jan. 2015	Finance, Personnel & Buildings Committee Full Governing Body Meetings Governor Link for Foundation and Year 1 Governor Link for Pupil Premium Grant
Mr Richard Hyde	Co-opted	Jan. 2015	Finance, Personnel & Buildings Committee (Vice-Chair) Full Governing Body Meetings Governor Link for Years 2,3,4
Cllr Mohammed Nawaz	Local Authority	Oct. 2015	Full Governing Body Meetings Governor link for Foundation and Year 1
Mrs Michelle Sogga	Parent	Jan. 2015	Vice Chair of Governors Full Governing Body Meetings Governor Link for SEND Governor link for Year 2, 3,4
Mr Paul Stanyard	Staff	Ex-officio	Head teacher All committees
Mrs Julia Surman	Parent	Jan. 2013	Chair of Governors Finance, Personnel & Buildings Committee Full Governing Body Meetings Governor Link for Leadership Team
Mr Dave West	Co-opted	Sept. 2015	Full Governing Body Meetings Governor Link for Child Protection and Safeguarding
Mrs Alison Jackson	Clerk		Clerk to Governors

We take this opportunity to wish you and your families a relaxing and enjoyable Christmas break.