



# Camestone Lower School Governing Body

Spring Term Newsletter 2016

Dear Parents & Carers,

Please find below an update on some of the activities that have taken place in school during the last term which contribute to the achievement of our current school priorities:

- There has been investment in new reading books and the library space has been upgraded during February half term. Our thanks go to Cllr Nawaz and Cllr Boutall for donations from their Ward Funds.
- Reading books have been re-banded in line with the new national curriculum.
- Targeted support, for those pupils who require it, continues to be improved. e.g. 1:1 Communication workshops, intervention programmes and there has been staff training to support various initiatives.
- Values education is now supported by the introduction of the Golden Rules (whole school rules) and a revised Behaviour Policy. (available on the website)
- The British Values Policy has been developed and is supported by the Values Programme. (Both are available on the school aims section of the website). This term we have celebrated Motivation and Value.
- A targeted programme of training/coaching is in place to improve knowledge, develop leadership and provide career development for all staff.
- The new assessment framework is now implemented across the school. Focus is now on ensuring the systems are robust, grading well evidenced, validated and plans for moderation are in progress.
- Governor visits have shown that we continue to challenge the senior leadership team regards internal monitoring systems -
  - "Monitoring of Teaching and learning has a clear focus with a cross school approach being taken to learn from best practice and identify areas of inconsistency. The results of the monitoring were being communicated, both within the leadership team and in phase areas, to ensure that strengths could be shared as good practice and areas for development considered and implemented
- Progress reports presented to governors indicate that pupils are progressing well in all year groups. We looked at the progress of different groups of children which helps us to ensure that there are no groups that are being disadvantaged. It was clear from discussion that the leadership team have a

good knowledge of the pupils and teaching staff have identified those who require extra support and implemented strategies to help them progress.

In addition, a recent Governor visit noted the following:

'A recent pupil survey showed that pupils were able to articulate their learning and the progress they have made, showing pride in their work. Following changes to the marking policy, pupils were clear about knowing what they were working on to improve their work further'

### **Home Reading**

One of our key priorities this year is to continue to raise the standards of reading across the whole school. We are fortunate to have parents and ladies from the WI who volunteer to listen to children read in school via the Schoolreader programme. In addition, guided reading takes place in class, reading buddies have been set up across the school and various initiatives have been implemented in classes to raise reading standards. Bug club is available at lunchtimes and is very popular with the children with demand often exceeding spaces.

Evidence in school shows that children who regularly read at home, whether it be school/home books, magazines or on-line, significantly improve their reading. Starting good reading habits in Foundation Stage helps as they progress through the school. We encourage all parents to regularly read at home with their children. We fully appreciate the challenges that face many families in this regard but would encourage you to discuss any problems you experience with the class teacher who may have some ideas and strategies to help you to support your child's reading progress.

Bug club is available at [www.activelearnprimary.co.uk](http://www.activelearnprimary.co.uk) for those who have access to the internet at home. Usernames and passwords are in the cover of reading records.

### **An Update on conversion to Primary School**

The consultation closed on 18<sup>th</sup> December and received a very positive response. A Consultation report was written in January and is available on the school website. Of particular interest may be the governors responses to questions raised in section 2.

On 21st January the Governors agreed that the school would change the age range of the school to a 4 - 11 years primary commencing September 2017. Therefore the current year 3 will be the first year group who will not leave at the end of year 4 but will remain at Camestone until the end of year 6.

The governors have been fully involved in discussions regarding the provision of facilities to support this change. Our main focus has been to provide classroom space, ensuring the full Primary curriculum can be delivered effectively, to retain the family feel of Camestone, have low impact on the environment and our neighbours and consider future development of the school. A planning application is in the process of being submitted. It is anticipated, pending planning approval, that a two storey, 4 classroom building will be developed in the foundation playground area (currently largely occupied by storage facilities). As part of this process the Foundation Play area will be redeveloped to incorporate a covered outdoor space. Staff

parking also forms part of the planning approval process and as a result the staff car park will be redesigned.

It is expected that building contractors will be on site sometime between December 2016 and March 2017, assuming planning approval is given, although firm arrangements have yet to be agreed as you will appreciate many other local schools are also undergoing development. The governors are committed to keeping disruption to a minimum.

Concerns raised regards the congestion at drop off/pick up times have been debated, The Travel survey (thank you to all those who completed one) is being analysed and Bedford Borough surveys have taken place. Local councillors have also noted concerns from local residents. Please be assured we are all working together to develop a workable travel plan.

The safety of pupils and their families is paramount and therefore we encourage all parents/carers who use Jowitt Avenue and neighbouring roads to drop off/pick up to consider any changes that can be made to their current journey (car share, alternative parking places, short walk vs less stress) We also ask that you park with consideration to pedestrians, other road users and our neighbours.

## **Other News**

### **Attendance**

Attendance is currently 95.47% which is lower than last term and we currently have a number of pupils who are below 90%. (Persistent Absentees). Our Education Welfare Officer visits the school regularly to meet with parents and the Senior Education Welfare Officer has been positive about the schools monitoring of attendance and the processes in place to assist parents with improving their child's attendance. At Camestone children who fall below 92% attendance are closely monitored. Please ensure your child is in school unless they are unwell.

### **Parent Questionnaire - Curriculum Information**

In June last year a Parent Questionnaire identified that some parents did not have a clear indication of what is being taught. In response to this the school website is currently undergoing redevelopment to provide ongoing information about our curriculum. However, in the meantime, we would like to draw your attention to the curriculum information currently available on each year group page of the website and the Maths, Reading and Writing Progression Overviews that are available on the year group pages for years 1- 4.

### **Policies**

The Governing body regularly review policies. We would like to draw your attention to the following that have been reviewed and will shortly be available on the school website:

Equality Policy

The School Behaviour Policy

Anti-Bullying Policy

Code of Conduct: Parents/Carers and Other visitors

British values  
Complaints Policy

#### Kick Ash - Anti Smoking Policy

In March the school adopted the Kick Ash Anti-smoking policy which aims to prevent the future uptake of smoking by young people by reducing their exposure to smoking (including e-cigarettes). We hope that parents and carers and staff will support this policy by refraining from smoking in the vicinity of the school gates. (N.B Smoking (including e-cigarettes) is already prohibited on school premises) The full policy is available on the website with details of support organisations for those who wish to stop smoking. Your support is appreciated.

#### Governing Body Business

In February we appointed Mrs Alison Jackson as Clerk to Governors.

An Annual Report of the Governing Body is now available on the school website which highlights the key issues faced and addressed by the governing body over the past year.

**We wish you and your families an enjoyable Easter break.**

#### TERM DATES FOR 2016 - 2017

##### **Autumn Term 2016**

Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> September 2016 - Friday 16<sup>th</sup> December 2016

**Half Term** - Monday 24<sup>th</sup> October - Friday 28<sup>th</sup> October

**Teacher Training Days** - Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> and Monday 5<sup>th</sup> September

##### **Spring Term 2017**

Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2017 - Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> April 2017

**Half Term** - Monday 13<sup>th</sup> February - Friday 17<sup>th</sup> February

**Teacher Training Day** - Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> January

##### **Summer Term 2017**

Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> April 2017 - Friday 21<sup>st</sup> July 2017

**Half Term** - Monday 29<sup>th</sup> May - Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> June

**May Day Holiday** Monday 1<sup>st</sup> May

**Teacher Training Day** - Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> April and Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> May