



Camp School Governors Newsletter 2017/18

Welcome to our Camp School Governors newsletter for 2017/18. This is to update you on what we've been doing this year, and say a bit about the school's finances. We hope you find the information useful, and would welcome any feedback.



The role of the Governors

The Governing Body [pictured] is made up of staff, parents and other members of our local community. We provide strategic leadership for the school and help ensure every child gets the best possible education. In the eyes of the law, the purpose of governing bodies is to conduct the school with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement.

Ofsted inspection

A major achievement for the school this year was a successful Ofsted inspection in February. The school and governors had stepped up their preparation, anticipating that one was likely this year. Governors were interviewed by the inspectors, and spoke about their close co-operation with the Head and her Leadership Team, and good understanding of the school's teaching and learning, and culture. The interview also focused on the key areas of Safeguarding, Pupil achievement and School Improvement.

The Governors would like to thank all the teachers, staff and pupils for their hard work in achieving this. As is normal, the school and governors had just half a day's notice of the inspection. This can be stressful, but the calm and structured approach taken by the school's leadership and staff resulted in an excellent report, of which the school can be rightly proud. Thanks also to parents and carers who contributed with feedback through the Ofsted website, as this helped confirm the inspectors' impressions of a caring and nurturing school with strong leadership.



Recent activity

Our primary role as Governors is to support the school whilst holding it to account for its performance. This includes reviewing a range of data, to give assurance that children are learning and progressing well. The data never includes any information about individual children. In recent years there have been big changes in the way schools monitor children's learning as the old levels system was scrapped. The governors, as well as the school staff, have had to learn and understand the new system. We always remember that the data represents children, so we focus on checking how all groups are doing, and on what can be done to ensure everyone can progress well and attain their full potential.

The OFSTED inspection highlighted that the school's leaders in Foundation subjects (i.e. all subjects outside English, Maths and Science) should have a 'firm understanding of the strengths and areas for development within their subjects'. The school has set up a plan and review process to enable subject leaders to fulfill this aim. Each Governor has also been assigned to a subject - to support the relevant leader. Governors have undertaken visits to help them understand the opportunities and challenges involved with each subject area, including receiving feedback from children.

Governors attended the recent school INSET School Development Plan day, and will continue to be involved as the Plan is finalised for the year ahead.

New GDPR regulations came into force in May, requiring the school to re-evaluate its use of personal data. This required updates to Privacy Notices and policies. Governors worked alongside the school to ensure it was prepared and that staff had the necessary training and awareness. Data protection will be an ongoing focus area for the school.

The school staff have had extensive training in STEPS, a therapeutic behaviour management approach focused on techniques aimed at developing internal discipline in children so they can learn how to self-regulate and make the right behaviour choices. It involves focusing on teaching positive behaviours and de-escalating incidents. It also focuses on a restorative approach coupled with relevant consequences for behavior choices. This was outlined to Governors in a briefing session, and will inform the adoption of a revised school behaviour policy early in the new school year. There will be information sessions offered to parents next term to outline the approach and present the behaviour policy.

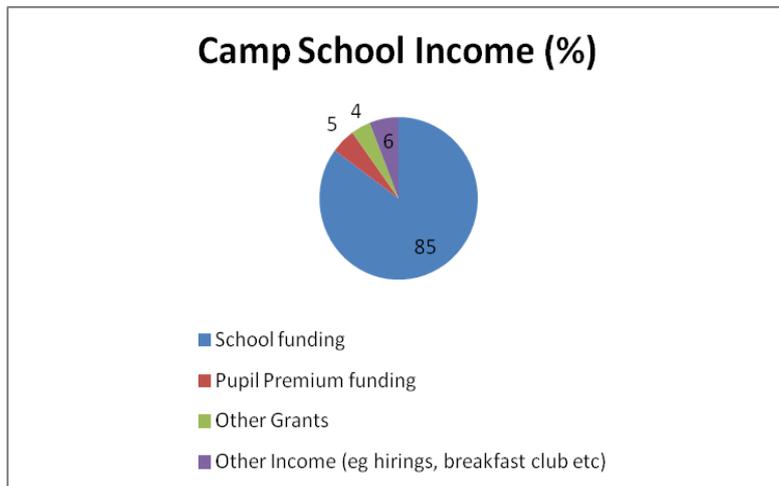
Road safety remains a regular issue covered at Governor meetings. This year has seen much progress with Hertfordshire County Council - a consultation for a new 20mph zone in the Camp area and an assessment by the Highways dept regarding possible improvements to Camp Road are both now underway. As governors, we recently approved a new School Travel Policy encouraging more safe and active travel to school.

Finances

The school budget is a major area of focus for the Governing Body, and is discussed with them in detail when set, with further updates during the year.



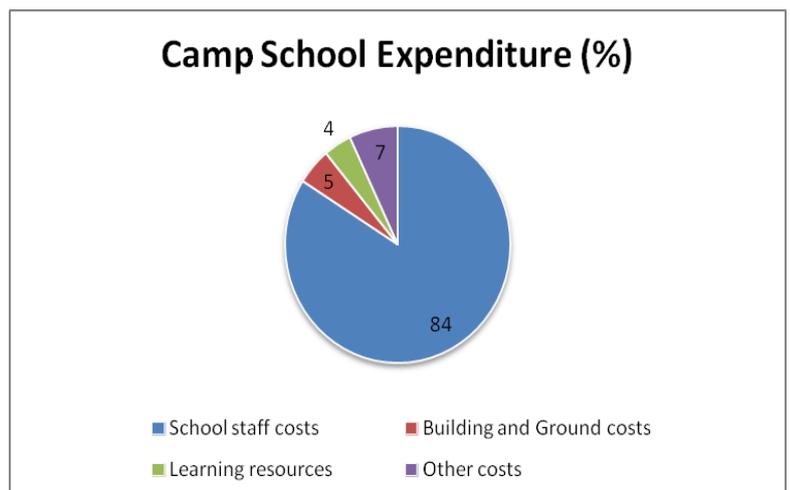
The first graph shows from where the school receives its income. Camp receives around 90% from Hertfordshire County Council, out of education funding it receives from the Government.



As you can see this includes the 'Pupil Premium', which is additional funding aimed at helping disadvantaged pupils of all abilities perform better, and close the gap between them and their peers. Camp was praised in the Ofsted report for its effective use of this money, and mentioned the role of Governors in challenging and supporting the school in pursuing the school's ambition for disadvantaged pupils to 'aspire to greatness'.

The second graph shows how the school spends its money with the majority of it being spent on staff. At Camp, the children benefit from a good pupil-teacher ratio of [16:1] – which is higher than most schools similar to ours.

Due to careful financial management, the school was able to live within its means during 2017/18. A factor in achieving this was a significant increase in revenue from hirings. We would like to thank those who have helped the school by linking it up with community groups and organisations who are now making use of the premises at evenings, weekends and during holidays. If anyone is involved with, or aware of, other groups who may be interested in hiring then please contact the school office.



As you will be aware from media reports, the overall financial climate for schools remains challenging. As Governors we will continue to work with and support the school in managing its budget, to ensure the school continues to provide quality education for all its children.

Summary

As Governors we voluntarily commit time and effort to our work but enjoy being involved with a school that aims for the very best for its pupils within a supportive environment. The praise given to the school in the Ofsted report recognised this, and the school's strong reputation can be seen in the high level of applications it now receives for places. We would like to thank the children, staff, parents/carers, and all those involved in making Camp School special!