

# Governors' Newsletter



## Message from the Chair

Happiness, Curiosity, Resilience and Kindness – four values at the heart of our school vision. This term, governors have witnessed these at first hand, both in classrooms and in the playground, with excellent behaviour for learning during lessons, and friendship and fun at play. We're extremely proud of our pupils – they're a credit to themselves and to the school!

My first term and a half as Chair of Governors has been busy. We've celebrated the fantastic SATs success of last year's Year 6, been commended for our Thinking Schools practice by the founder of Thinking Matters, and shared our approach with visitors from Lithuania. We've witnessed the new build change from rubble to learning spaces (not quite classrooms yet!), embarked on our journey towards the Eco-Schools Green Flag Award, and welcomed parents into school for Christmas celebrations for the first time since 2019.

It's with great sadness that we say goodbye to our wonderful headteacher, Debbie Canner, at the end of this term. As I mentioned in my recent letter, Debbie has ensured that the culture and values we hold dear have flourished and has also been instrumental in driving school improvement, constantly striving to make ESPS the best it can be for everyone.

The recruitment process for Debbie's replacement is underway. Pupils and staff were asked for their input into the advertising brochure, and it was extremely pleasing to see our vision and values reflected so strongly in their responses. Kindness, happiness, resilience, Thinking Schools and the environment rang through from Reception to Year 6. We will of course keep you updated throughout the process. Once again, we'd like to thank Mr Page, our fantastic deputy, for agreeing to serve as Acting Head for the Summer Term.

I'd like to thank our incredible teachers and support staff who continue to work tirelessly to ensure that all our pupils are happy and making the best possible progress. [Nathalie Townley](#)



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# Diversity and Inclusion at East Sheen Primary School

We're extremely proud of East Sheen Primary School's diverse and inclusive community. We value the individuality of each child and want to make sure that everyone feels included and respected. There are three main strands to the school's approach to inclusivity: Diversity in the Curriculum, Diversity Projects and a Diversity Events Calendar.

## Diversity in the Curriculum

Governors are regularly updated on how ESPS ensures that the curriculum is relevant and accessible to every child. The Diversity Leader has updated our libraries to ensure that the widest possible range of topics and authors are available (including more dual language books) to help children relate to the story and promote a love of reading. Subject Leaders have reviewed the curriculum so that a diverse range of scientists, artists and important people in history are being studied.

Through annual conferencing with teachers, governors monitor how ESPS adapts the curriculum so that it can be accessed by children with different learning profiles, including those children supported by EHCPs and those benefiting from our SRP (Special Resource Provision), the Phoenix Room. Many children have individualised curricula which are constantly being adapted and personalised.

## Diversity Projects

Diversity Ambassadors from Year 5 help every child to feel welcome, contribute to designing the school's Diversity Projects and help communicate projects to the rest of the school and the wider community.

Our children speak at least 35 languages and children are encouraged to share their home languages at school, for example teaching their classmates to say hello and good morning. One project is the Diversity Songbook which showcases some pupils singing songs in their other language (you can watch the video [here](#) and even contribute!)

Other projects include our Diversity Map (under construction), which aims to show children's heritage and family connections around the world. This term, the Diversity Ambassadors are carrying out a Diversity Survey to find out about the school experiences of children from Year 1 to Year 6, particularly how included and valued they feel. Governors look forward to meeting the Ambassadors later this year to discuss the results.

## Diversity Events

Events celebrated in the last year include Black History Month, Anti-Bullying Week and Diwali, as well as Christmas, Hanukkah and Kwanzaa. The children have also enjoyed days when they brought their favourite food to school.

With so much going on in school to celebrate diversity and to promote inclusion, we're delighted to welcome Effie LeBouquin as a Diversity Associate to the Children, Families and Community committee. Effie will work with us to ensure that all families feel included and engaged in our wonderful school community.

[Nathalie Townley & Susannah Hart](#)

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# Wellbeing

Our school vision begins: 'Our purpose is to nurture happy, confident children...' Why is this so important? Because we know that children succeed in an environment where they feel safe, happy and enthused to engage with learning.

Wellbeing is central to our practice, whether it's through being a Sing Up! Gold Award school, our focus on using a positive, relationship-based behaviour strategy, or outreach from our specialist team from The Phoenix Room. In 2018, ESPS gained the Wellbeing Award for Schools, recognising the importance we place on effective, embedded practices. In 2022/23, we began the re-accreditation process, demonstrating our ongoing commitment to prioritise pupil and staff wellbeing. [Emmet Regan](#)

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# Environmental Intelligence

In 2019, the governors set the strategic objective of becoming an Environmentally Intelligent (EI) school. Each of the central committees has an appointed governor with a focus on EI to ensure environmental factors are considered in committee decision making, and improvements are incorporated into school policies.

Since 2019, environmental initiatives have been embedded into the curriculum. The Green Team has worked to promote the message of 'Reduce, Reuse and Recycle', with in-school projects and assemblies and external activities such as litter picks.

The Guardians of the Planet programme, which was introduced in 2021, links each year group to an environmental theme: Reception: Oceans/Endangered Animals; Year 1: Green Transport; Year 2: Climate change; Year 3: Deforestation; Year 4: Waste/Consumption; Year 5: Sustainable Fashion; and Year 6: Air Quality.

This year ESPS has signed up to the Eco-Schools programme which leads to accreditation. The scheme provides material and activities on the ten topics of Biodiversity, Energy, Global Citizenship, Healthy Living, Litter, Marine, School Grounds, Transport, Waste and Water. Led by Emily Goodwin, the Green Team are working through the seven steps to Green Flag accreditation. They've completed an Environmental Review and are developing an Action Plan. This term they'll deliver a special one-off event in school: (Re)LoveOurStuff, a pop-up, second-hand clothes shop. This activity will engage the whole school in cutting carbon, while saving money, diverting clothing from landfill, and raising awareness about the environmental costs of the fashion industry. Next term, after the build is completed, the focus will move to developing the school grounds and reinstating the planting of our own vegetables and herbs. The intention is to achieve accreditation by the end of this academic year.

EI is considered in the continued development of the school site and the new build will incorporate a living roof to promote biodiversity. The SLT and governors are also investigating installing additional solar PV panels, to both generate renewable electricity and mitigate the impact of the higher cost of future energy bills.

Chris Styles



*Sheen playground*

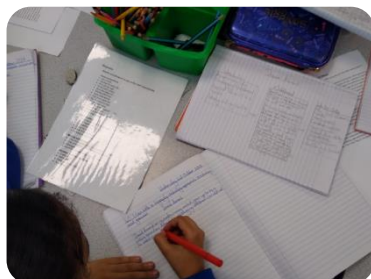
# Progress and achievement

Governors continue to give focus to the academic life of the school in order to ensure that progress is maximised for all pupils, and that we continue to provide a thoughtful, broad and balanced curriculum. To help monitor this target, governors look closely at the school's results in national standardised tests – SATS at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, the Phonics Screening Check in Year 1, and the multiplication check in Year 4. The excellent results that our children manage to achieve in these tests, year-on-year, reflect the hard work and application of East Sheen pupils, and of course their dedicated teachers.

Although the SATS results were not formally published in 2022, we were particularly pleased with the results achieved by our Year 6 pupils. The proportion of ESPS pupils who achieved the expected standard or above in reading, writing and mathematics was considerably above the national average and above the local average in Richmond, itself a high performing Borough. The proportion of pupils who achieved the 'high standard' in the same three subjects was also significantly above the national average, with maths a consistently strong area.

The results are also helpful in identifying areas to focus on, and in this 2022-23 academic year a strong emphasis has been and will continue to be on Key Stage 1 writing. It is recognised that KS1 cohorts were significantly impacted by COVID, having spent a greater proportion of their formal education out of the classroom. All help from parents is enormously valued in this area, be it supporting the reading programmes in school, and finding as many opportunities to practise reading, writing and spelling at home.

Lastly, we are encouraged by the creativity shown by teachers in the ways they have managed to teach our *environmental intelligence* strategic goal across the curriculum. We are confident that this focus area will continue to provide



our children with the knowledge and skills to participate in the debates and to meet the challenges they will face in their lives beyond ESPS. [Andrew Miller](#)

## Thinking Schools

The Headship Team and teaching staff at ESPS are constantly looking at how to offer the best learning experience for our children.

To this end, ESPS was one of the first schools in the UK to gain the Thinking Schools accreditation and the Thinking Schools methodology is now embedded in all our teaching. As governors, we can see that this has had an amazing impact on learning and helps make our children self-confident, thoughtful and excellent communicators. In November the school was very proud to be asked to host fourteen teachers from Lithuania to showcase the benefits of being a Thinking School. They were blown away by the stimulating learning environments and high-quality teaching and learning they saw. This isn't the first time we have hosted teachers from other countries and it is a privilege we look set to continue to enjoy given the positive feedback!

A second example is the research-based methods we use for teaching writing, specifically how the teachers frame the concept of success criteria and ensuring that the children write with their audience in mind – asking who will be reading the piece and how they want the reader to feel. The teacher works with the class to create a thinking map which is a dynamic tool to help each child understand what the writing should achieve, and the class composes shared success criteria using the 'Who, What, How' strategy, with audience and purpose at the heart of writing tasks. Through our visits to school, governors can see this methodology in action and appreciate the value it adds. Recently, this approach has been the subject of an article by an esteemed educational

researcher and it was gratifying to see it validated externally. [Emily Maltby](#)



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# A resources update

Managing the school's resources is a complex task, whether it's balancing the finances, recruiting staff, or providing and equipping the classrooms and associated facilities.

This year has been no exception. You'll be aware from the media that school finances are under a huge amount of pressure as all schools struggle with unfunded pay increases, inflationary pressures, and in particular the increased costs of energy. Here at ESPS we're on target to finish the financial year with comparatively healthy reserves to carry forward to next year. We await with interest the detail of next year's funding round, following Jeremy Hunt's (Chancellor of the Exchequer) announcement last year of a funding boost for state schools.

The most exciting news that we've been waiting for this year has been the formal approval by our local authority to replace the old demountable buildings housing Year 1 and part of Year 3. This has involved the installation of temporary accommodation in the Sheen playground, considerable disruption to the reception block and the movement of children around the school



After an unfortunate delay due to unforeseen ground conditions, progress is now racing along.

The new building comprises 15 sections, which were prefabricated in South Wales, complete with doors, windows and many of the fittings already in place. These units, each on its own lorry, were delivered to school and successfully craned over the existing buildings and into place during the Christmas break. They were then bolted together and very quickly made watertight.

Over the next couple of months, the new block will be faced off with brickwork similar to the existing buildings, the living roof will be installed, and the internal electrics and plumbing completed. If all goes to plan, we expect the classrooms to be in use from the start of the Summer Term. [Graham Dyer and Nicky Dorman](#)



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## Safeguarding

At ESPS, our pupils' welfare is of paramount concern. The Governing Body works to ensure the safeguarding of all pupils. The school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy was reviewed in the Autumn Term and is available to read on the website or by clicking [here](#). Helpful resources around e-safety and water safety can also be found [here](#). At the last Full Governing Body meeting, governors sat a short test to ensure that their knowledge of the safeguarding policy was up to scratch. You'll be pleased to hear that everyone passed with flying colours! [Jess Oliver](#)

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## Ofsted

As you may be aware, Ofsted (the school's regulator) is likely to visit the school over the coming weeks as part of their regular inspection plan. We were last inspected in 2008 and re-inspection has been somewhat delayed due to Covid. Several local schools, including Barnes Primary and Sheen Mount, have recently been inspected. We're prepared for the visit which will give us a chance to demonstrate all the fantastic work that has been going on across the curriculum. When we're notified, we will write to the school community to update. [Emmet Regan](#)

# Welcoming our new teachers

ESPS was delighted to welcome six new teachers to the school in September 2022. We've spoken to three of them for this newsletter: Esme Dickinson, Year 1 (ED), Ali Barnes, Year 5 (AB) and Siobhan Dell, EYFS (SD). Here is a bit about them to get to know them!

## Can you tell us a bit of background about yourself?

ED: I grew up in Norwich and at the age of 18 I moved to Twickenham where I studied to become a teacher at St Mary's University.

AB: Originally my background was in IT and more recently in a more customer facing role. I have been a parent at East Sheen Primary for 14 years, and prior to training to become a teacher I was a Teaching Assistant here for 7 years.

SD: I grew up in north London but moved south of the river 14 years ago, after I completed a postgrad at St Mary's University, Twickenham. My passion for working with children came from my own dad who was a teacher and my experience of volunteering in schools and nurseries. This then led me to wanting to help shape young minds for the future.

## How has your first term been at East Sheen Primary?

ED: I have loved my first term at East Sheen Primary. The staff have been so supportive and the children have been wonderful.

AB: It's been amazing! Really busy but all the staff and children have been so friendly and welcoming, it's been wonderful and I've loved it.

SD: Working at East Sheen has been enjoyable; the staff, parents and children have been very welcoming. What strikes me about East Sheen is their own pioneering learning concepts.

## What have you enjoyed the most about working at East Sheen Primary?

ED: I have enjoyed the welcoming and friendly atmosphere here at ESPS.

AB: As I've been part of the ESPS community for so long, it has felt a bit like coming home! I've so enjoyed being part of this fabulous and supportive team, and working with such kind and thoughtful children.

SD: I have enjoyed learning about how to embed thinking hats, thinking maps and habits of mind in the Early Years. East Sheen is a school that is passionate, hardworking and puts the child at the centre.

## Describe East Sheen Primary in three words

ED: Community, Kind and Happy.

AB: Happy, inclusive and diverse

## Tell us a fun fact about yourself

ED: I have a border collie called Bella!

AB: I used to row for Scotland and have raced internationally as part of the Great Britain team.

SD: My fun fact is, I am a big country music fan and my favourite holiday was in 2015 when I went to Nashville.

[Jess Zayouna](#)



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# Pupil attendance

We have been pleased to see attendance improving this year, after a period where attendance nationally has been very affected by the pandemic. Attendance at the start of the 2022/23 year was particularly pleasing and very close to our target of 97%. A bout of illnesses close to the Christmas break saw attendance dip, but currently, attendance stands at 94.3%, compared with the national picture of 92.3%. The school works closely with the Education Welfare Service (EWS) to ensure that children attend school. Offering wrap-around care, support from EWS for families struggling with attendance and having staff trained in emotion-related school avoidance (ERSA) are just some of the ways the school supports attendance. The school asks for parents to support with attendance by ensuring children are in school every day, where the team will look after them and help them succeed. [Harry Page](#)

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# Governor Information

A warm welcome to Eftal Le Bouquin who joins us as an associate to our Children, Families and Community Committee, taking on the role of Diversity Link Governor. You can find out more about who we are and what we do on the school website [here](#). We are actively looking to diversify our board and would welcome any interest from parents or carers from Black, Asian and other Global and Majority backgrounds. Please get in contact with us via our clerk, Alex Watson Jones, at [clerktogovernors@eastsheen.richmond.sch.uk](mailto:clerktogovernors@eastsheen.richmond.sch.uk).

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