

# Governors' Newsletter



## Message from the Chair

At East Sheen Primary, we are ambitious for all. We encourage all our children to aspire to and achieve high standards, we support our teachers and support staff to pursue development opportunities, and as set out in the governing board's medium-term goals, we strive for the school to be recognised as a beacon of outstanding education.

Our [school ethos](#) is to be aspirational for all children, regardless of their starting points. School leaders, teachers, support staff, parents and carers, and pupils work in partnership to provide a safe and stimulating environment where **every** child can fully develop their potential personally, academically and socially. Governors regularly scrutinise data to ensure that pupils across all year groups are making good progress. When a child is not making expected progress, governors are confident that teachers and senior leaders work together to address barriers to learning. Higher achieving children are stretched and challenged to ensure that they also make as much progress as possible.

'Learning forever' is one of the Habits of Mind that drives the school's development plan. Through a carefully thought-out induction programme and designated time for year group planning, new teachers are supported to deliver the high standards that ESPS is known for. Longer serving teachers are keen to embrace development opportunities, becoming subject leaders and sharing their knowledge through weekly CPD sessions. It's wonderful to see how ambitious our teachers are, with eight teachers pursuing leadership qualifications and educational research projects this year.

We're delighted that the school's ambition continues to be recognised. In March 2024, ESPS gained an Award of Excellence as part of the Thinking School's re-accreditation process. The University of Exeter's [report](#) is a real celebration of what makes ESPS such a successful school and is well worth a read. We're also extremely proud of the progress made by pupils across the school and the attainment achieved by pupils in national tests (see below for more details).

As Year 6 pupils move on to secondary school, we're confident that they are well prepared for the challenges ahead, thank them for their immense contribution to the school, and hope that they continue to thrive in their new schools.

On behalf of all the governors, I would like to thank the ESPS community for its continued support and wish you all an enjoyable summer break.

Nathalie Townley, Chair of Governors

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# Keeping our children safe at East Sheen Primary School

Overseeing ESPS's safeguarding arrangements is a crucial part of our role as governors. Safeguarding is the umbrella term for all the actions the school takes to keep our pupils safe. We know that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and we therefore work with all members of the community to ensure that we fulfil these duties and responsibilities.

All new governors must complete safeguarding training. Annually, all governors are required to read the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Keeping Children Safe in Education, and to complete an online safeguarding quiz. Training is also updated at regular intervals. We have two Safeguarding Link Governors who regularly receive safeguarding updates from Achieving for Children (AfC), as well as using The Key, our online governor resource, for new information.

An important part of our safeguarding responsibilities is ensuring that the school teaches children about healthy relationships, how to keep themselves safe and how to ask for help. This is delivered through teaching in assemblies and through a well-designed Personal, Social, Health Education (PSHE) curriculum, Relationships Education (RSE) policy and online safety curriculum, the last of which is reviewed annually to adapt to the ever-evolving online world.

Every year the Safeguarding Link Governors complete a Safeguarding Report, based on the annual audit conducted by the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). It summarises the current safeguarding context, policies, procedures, and practices in place at

ESPS. It is one component of how the Governing Body holds the Headship Team to account for safeguarding at ESPS. This report confirmed our arrangements are robust.

At our inspection in 2023, Ofsted reviewed our safeguarding and concluded: 'The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders ensure that staff understand the signs that suggest that pupils may be at risk. Staff are diligent in logging any concerns about pupils and identifying patterns in pupils' behaviour and well-being. Leaders follow up any concerns promptly and are persistent in making sure that pupils and their families get the right support. Leaders ensure that all the required pre-recruitment checks on staff are completed. Pupils are encouraged to keep themselves safe. For example, they are taught about stranger danger and staying safe online. Leaders offer a range of therapeutic support and help pupils to manage their emotional well-being and mental health.'

We recently produced a [Safeguarding Snapshot](#) which summarises our different roles.

[Emmet Regan, Safeguarding Link Governor](#)



# An update from teaching & learning

It has been another busy year for the school's Teaching and Learning Committee, which monitors and evaluates pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching and learning. It also ensures that the school provides a high-quality learning experience and a broad and balanced curriculum that meets the needs of all our pupils.

Our work has been varied, drawing on a wide range of sources to help us understand our pupils' progress. At each of our meetings (there were five during the year) we reviewed a detailed Headteacher's report and data dashboard that shows attainment against national and local indicators. This has helped the committee celebrate the school's achievements while identifying areas for potential improvement, and ensuring that ongoing targets for reading, writing and maths remain appropriate. We also analysed results from national tests and held leaders to account through a schedule of classroom visits and conferencing sessions with subject leaders for maths, art, history, science, music, geography and early years.

However, while our statutory duties are important, it was perhaps our informal classroom visits and "walking tours" that offered the clearest and most valuable insights into school life. In a rewarding year, these sessions – led by members of the schools' fantastic pupil leadership team – proved a particular highlight.

Tristan Chapple

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## Excellence in national tests

Much attention is paid every year to the results of the KS2 SATs results, taken in May by Y6 pupils. However, our children take several other statutory tests during their time at ESPS and we'd like to share their excellent results with you here.

### **Reception: Early Learning Goals**

Our reception children this year have achieved great results in all subjects with the percentage of children reaching the Expected Level as follows:

Reading: 83.5%

Writing: 82.4%

Number: 84.7%

Good Level of Development (GLD, Expected in all areas): 80%

Although we don't have the national GLD figure for 2024 yet, last year's national average was 67.2%.

### **Year 1: Phonics Screening Check (PSC)**

92.1% of our children passed their PSC this year, compared with last year's national average of 79%.

### **Year 2: KS1 SATs**

This is the first year where KS1 SATs have been optional. Even though children at East Sheen took the tests this year, they were not moderated and there is no comparative data. Teachers will use the results of these tests internally to help their assessment of children's learning.

*Happy* | *Curious* | *Resilient* | *Kind*



## Year 4: Multiplication Check (MTC)

Children in Y4 did very well at their multiplication tests, with an ESPS mean score of 22.02 out of 25. We don't know what the mean score in other schools was, but we do know that 45% of our children got full marks this year compared to a national average last year of 29%.

As you can see from these results, children at East Sheen make great progress and achieve very highly.

Susannah Milligan

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## A focus on attendance

Since the pandemic forced schools to close and encouraged people to self-isolate in 2020, school attendance in England has struggled to recover to pre-pandemic levels. Over the past three years, the number of children missing more than 10% of school days (the equivalent of four school weeks) has been a staggering 22.5%, 21.2% and 20% respectively. National attendance this year stands at 92.9%.

At ESPS staff, parents and governors understand the importance of sustained school attendance; this ensures children access both essential learning and the rich social development opportunities provided in school. Each day missed can cause a pupil to fall behind or to feel isolated.



The governors set the attendance target for all pupils at 97%. To support pupils and their families to reach this, the school celebrates attendance in newsletters and assemblies, and also works with agencies such as the Education Welfare Service, School Nursing Team and Mental Health Support Team. We are always keen to support pupils with barriers to attendance. While our attendance is higher than national averages, our current rate of 95.1% is still slightly short of our target. Term-time holidays contribute to absences, and the law is clear that holidays should not be booked in term-time. The welfare team in the medical room are always happy to support children who are not feeling 100% to return to the classroom, and often this softer start results in a rapid and remarkable recovery. So please do help us to achieve our target by continuing to support good attendance.

More information: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

Harry Page, Headteacher

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# Enhancing our school site

ESPS benefits from a large site with many newly constructed and recently modernised buildings, and extensive outdoor space. We know that the physical environment is vitally important to enable positive learning outcomes for children so we're always looking for ways to enhance our facilities. This year we completed several landscaping projects, including new playground markings and new planters in the Sheen playground, an allotment area and a chicken coop. Together with the recently upgraded astroturf, these ensure a stimulating outdoor learning environment. We improved our lighting recently, so that the school is now lit exclusively by LEDs, helping our well-being, the environment and our budget. In addition, newly installed window films are helping to keep the Y6 classrooms cool in summer. To the relief of parents/carers with pushchairs, new entrance gates are being installed over the holidays, improving ease of access. Many of these projects have been enabled by donations from our parent/carer community, so thank you as always for your invaluable support.

Helen Wrigglesworth



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# Exciting partnerships and collaborations

We are proud of our ongoing partnerships with local schools and charities, which play a vital role in enhancing the educational experience for ESPS students. This year, we've worked closely with St Paul's School to provide enrichment and challenge opportunities for our Years 5 and 6 pupils. This collaboration has included a range of activities focused on Mathematics, Classics and Latin lessons, as well as a Saturday school programme dedicated to STEM activities, creative writing, and outdoor learning. We're excited to continue these initiatives next year and look forward to welcoming St Paul's students to our school for additional STEM activities and the launch of a new Lego Club.

Supporting children's mental wellbeing is crucial, and we have built two strong partnerships this year to help with this. First, Achieving for Children's Beautiful Minds programme provides the opportunity to train selected students to become Mental Health Ambassadors for the school. Another local charity, Regenerate, has supported our Year 6 students in their transition to secondary school, focusing on resources to help them now and in the future.

These partnerships enrich our students' learning experiences and provide valuable opportunities for personal growth and development. We're committed to continuing them and to exploring new ways to support and challenge our pupils in future.

Polly Jones, Deputy Headteacher

*Happy* | *Curious* | *Resilient* | *Kind*



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# A resources update – an introduction to school finances

Parents new to ESPS may be surprised to think of a school as a small business, but that is exactly what it is. The leadership team and business manager must operate to carefully balance spending based on income received each year (around £3.9m for the year to March 2024), whilst managing a workforce of nearly 90 employees and delivering an excellent education for all our pupils.

Generation of income is quite complex with local authority statutory funding based on pupil numbers. Additional funds are provided for pupils with special needs and for the specialist resource provision. We also receive two substantial grants, the Pupil Premium and the Sports Premium; detailed reports on these are provided on the website.

Government funding is provided for free school meals for all Key Stage 1 pupils, and this year (and next!) the Mayor of London has additionally funded free school meals for Key Stage 2 pupils, in total around £250k.

We also had separate retrospective grants to cover some of the pay awards given to teachers and support staff and yet further grants to offset substantial additional pension premiums for teachers (not support staff) awarded by the government.

We have many other income sources, including grants, donations, letting income and insurance claims, as well as parental contributions to the cost of school trips and the amazing fundraising done by the PTA - over £75k this year.

Our main costs by far are staff salaries (£2.85m), but we also spend significantly on learning resources and curriculum (£355k), catering (£235k) and maintenance, energy and rates (£230k.)

Extremely careful management of our finances has enabled us to end the year with a small surplus of income over expenditure; this ensures we have healthy reserves to carry forward.

Graham Dyer, Chair of Resources



*Happy* | *Curious* | *Resilient* | *Kind*

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# Governor Information

Following the recent parent governor election, we were very pleased to welcome Sarah Odds and Martin Hill as new members of the board, sitting in the Resources and Children, Families and Community (CFC) committees respectively. We would like to thank our out-going parent governors, Jess Oliver and Leon Orr for their contributions to the board. We would also like to thank Nicky Dorman for her incredibly valuable contribution to the Governing Board over the last four and a half years and wish her well in her new adventures outside East Sheen. You can find out more about who we are and what we do by visiting the school website [here](#).

We are always on the lookout for new governors and continue to work to diversify our board, welcoming interest from parents or carers from Black, Asian and other Global and Majority backgrounds. Please direct any enquiries to our clerk at [clerktogovernors@eastsheen.richmond.sch.uk](mailto:clerktogovernors@eastsheen.richmond.sch.uk).

Nathalie Townley, Chair of Governors

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