

Governors' Newsletter



Message from the Chair

Every year, governors support the headship team with school tours for prospective parents. As well as setting up the hall, making tea and coffee and showing people around the school, we get to chat with local parents facing a very important decision – which school to choose for their four-year-old. Our locality is very fortunate to have an abundance of excellent primary schools. So why choose East Sheen Primary? What makes it special?

At the core of our school vision is the concept of ‘nurture’: “Our purpose is to **nurture** happy, confident children...” We believe that children succeed in an environment where they feel safe, happy and enthused to engage with learning. Pupil and Staff wellbeing has always been important at ESPS and, as explained in more detail below, Mrs Jones, our Senior Mental Health Lead, has continued to develop the school’s strategy in this area. During our learning walks and classroom visits with Mr Page and the Pupil Leadership Team, governors witness first-hand how happy and engaged the children are with their learning across all areas of the curriculum, whether it be English, Maths, Geography, PE or Music. It is very rewarding to see the success of this approach reflected in our pupil outcomes. Indeed, our pupils consistently achieve significantly above national averages in tests and our results are also above the averages for Richmond, the top performing borough in the country. See below for more information on our 2024 results.

We also pride ourselves in preparing our pupils for the challenges of life after primary school. Our whole-school approach of using Thinking Schools methodologies – thinking maps, thinking hats and habits of mind – teaches the children to organise their thinking, to consider issues from different perspectives, to develop habits of mind (the skills and attitudes necessary for lifelong learning) and to be solution-focussed. The environmental curriculum which threads from Reception to Year 6 raises awareness and promotes discussion and debate, as the children explore the various environmental challenges faced by our planet. By promoting inclusivity, we instill in our students essential values such as respect, kindness and tolerance. We hope these values will stay with them and help them to collaborate effectively with a range of peers throughout their lives.

Regardless of background or abilities, every student can excel at ESPS. Our teachers work tirelessly to provide individualised support for those who need it, whilst ensuring there is ample opportunity for stretch and challenge, so that each child reaches their full potential. We are extremely grateful to every member of staff for their commitment to delivering our school vision.



Nathalie Townley, Chair of Governors

Wellbeing at ESPS

At East Sheen Primary, wellbeing is at the core of what we do. We understand academic achievement is crucial, but so is ensuring our children are happy, and love coming to school. Our ethos focuses on nurturing a supportive and compassionate community, where every child feels valued and understood. This approach is not just a policy, but a living, breathing culture you can feel in every classroom and around the school.

This year, we introduced a number of wellbeing initiatives. We appointed wellbeing ambassadors from across year groups to ensure we remain conscious of wellbeing in everything we do; the ambassadors can make suggestions to the school about what and how we can improve. We also established a lunch-time wellbeing club where children can retreat from the hustle and bustle of the playground to read a book or relax. Providing spaces where children feel safe is crucial: children perform at their best when they feel secure.

We are lucky to have well-established links with Richmond's Mental Health Support Team. The brilliant team work onsite weekly with children, parents/carers and staff, depending on the need.

We also ensure that our staff are aware that their wellbeing is our priority. We recently used our thinking schools methodology with the staff to produce a circle map in order to understand their wellbeing needs and what more we can do to support them.

Our commitment to wellbeing underscores a broader vision of education – one where our staff feel supported and valued, and every child is nurtured to thrive academically, emotionally and socially.

Polly Jones, Deputy Headteacher and Deputy DSL

Emmet Regan, Chair, Children, Families & Community, and Safeguarding Link Governor



How Governors Monitor Teaching and Learning at ESPS

Over the course of a full school year, the governors on the Teaching and Learning Committee (T&L) have many opportunities to talk to teachers, visit the school and see the children's learning environment firsthand. All governors are expected to participate in at least one focused Learning Walk each year, where they normally visit a class in every year group; this is a very valuable way of seeing how children progress throughout the school and a wonderful chance to see the whole school in action on a typical day.

In addition, individual T&L governors carry out conferencing meetings with Subject Leaders to learn about the delivery of the curriculum in that subject, including plans, training and wishes.

Other Subject Leaders are invited to present to the committee: for example, the Early Reading Lead updated the governors last term. Nominated Link Governors within the committee meet the School Leaders responsible for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), Early Years and the Foundation Stage (EYFS), the allocation of the Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) and teaching children who are multilingual and have English as an additional language (EAL). Governors also visit classrooms and listen to pupil voice by talking to pupils about particular subjects, this year Art.

Reports on all the visits and meetings are then written up and shared with the other governors on the Teaching and Learning Committee and the full governing board. This way, all governors have a good overview of how the curriculum is being delivered at ESPS.

Susannah Milligan, Teaching & Learning Committee

Maintaining High Standards

A key role of the governors is to monitor how East Sheen Primary pupils are performing academically – to understand not only *what* they are learning, but *how well* they are learning. To do this, we compare academic results against previous cohorts of students to ensure our high standards are maintained; we also compare our pupils’ results against local and national averages. It is always a reassuring exercise. Whilst we expect our school and our pupils to perform to its and their full potential, it is worth noting how well they do in a wider context.

The information below is taken from the Government’s annual data report, published by Ofsted, and shows the performance of ESPS children in the most recent set of national tests (Phonics in Year 1; and SATS in Year 6).

	Performance in 2024	ESPS %	National %
Year 1 Phonics: % Expected standard	Significantly above national and 86 th percentile	92	80
Key Stage 2 Reading, Writing and Maths: % Expected standard	Significantly above national and 80 th percentile	74	61
Key Stage 2 Maths: % Expected standard	Significantly above national and 76 th percentile	84	73
Key Stage 2 Reading: % Higher standard	Significantly above national and 96 th percentile	54	28
Key Stage 2 Writing: % Greater depth	Significantly above national and 90 th percentile	26	13
Key Stage 2 Maths: % High standard	Significantly above national and 98 th percentile	53	24
Key Stage 2 English, Grammar, Punctuation & Spelling: % High standard	Significantly above national and 96 th percentile	60	32

These results are clearly very pleasing, and the data shows that we are one of the higher performing schools in Richmond – itself the highest performing borough in the entire country.

Data is not everything, of course, and there is a great deal of context behind these figures. Cohorts can vary significantly in terms of the range of experiences, talents and needs. Governors are keen to understand this context so the full performance of the school can be understood. We have never been a school to take our data for granted, or to sit back and coast. We will continue to set ambitious targets to ensure all pupils are engaged and prepared for the challenges ahead.

Andrew Miller, Chair, Teaching & Learning Committee



Financially Speaking

The total funding allocated to schools continues to put state-maintained schools nationally under ever greater pressure; schools are increasingly reliant on income from additional donations to be able to maintain high standards. Unfortunately, media headlines suggesting the government's full reimbursement of any additional costs are never quite as "full" as we would like, and usually requires very careful management to ensure minimal impact on the day-to-day running of the school.

The funding received from the local authority is based on pupil numbers. East Sheen Primary remains in a strong position, continuing to be over-subscribed at Reception entry. However, despite high pupil numbers, we are still projecting a deficit of around £75k for the financial year ending 31 March, 2025. This deficit will have to be funded by drawing on the school's existing reserves.

As mentioned last year, families living in London benefit from the Mayor's promise to fund all school meals for pupils in state-maintained primary schools. This saves each family over £450 per child every year. We fully support this initiative: ensuring all children have access to a healthy, hot lunch is important to their success in school. However, the Mayor's scheme provides funding for only 90% of eligible pupils. With more than 90% of our pupils now consuming the free meals, the school has to find an additional £450 each year for every unfunded pupil.

The headship team continues to consider ways to reduce parental costs, and has taken the decision to move the Year 6 trip to October instead of May/June. This will substantially reduce the cost of the trip without interfering with the fun or educational benefits of these trips for our students.

The school must once again thank the PTA, class reps, and the parents, in particular, for their generous fundraising efforts at the Christmas Fair, which raised £17,409.58. The PTA and the school work closely together to consider how this money is then used to the greatest benefit of all pupils.

Usually, this money is spent on special, one-off projects within the school: for instance, purchasing new IT equipment has been our focus this year, which has enhanced the children's learning experience. These purchases would have been unaffordable without the PTA treasury. PTA funds are never used for day-to-day costs, such as teachers' salaries, but always to enhance the pupils' learning environment.



Graham Dyer, Chair, Resources Committee

Safeguarding

I have been proud to serve as a governor at East Sheen Primary since April 2023, sitting on the Teaching & Learning committee. This year, I am excited to take on the role of Safeguarding Link Governor, alongside Emmet Regan, who has provided valuable governor leadership in this area for several years.

As governors, our focus is on monitoring how the school ensures that safeguarding is embedded in every aspect of its work. This includes reviewing policy, speaking with staff and pupils, and ensuring that children are taught how to keep themselves safe in an age-appropriate and effective way.

A key part of this role also involves gathering pupil voice – listening to children’s views on how they learn about safety, both online and in the real world. Their perspectives help us understand how well safeguarding messages are landing and how supported they feel; the school is committed to making sure every child feels safe, secure, and empowered to seek help when they need it.

I have been impressed by the work that ESPS does – led by the Headship Team of Harry Page (Designated Safeguarding Lead), Polly Jones (Deputy DSL) and Victoria Strang (Deputy DSL) – to ensure the well-being of every child is at the heart of everything. I look forward to continuing to work with the team to build on its already excellent safeguarding practices.

Raef Jackson, Safeguarding Link Governor, Teaching & Learning Committee



New Governor Information

This year we welcomed Anjali Doshi to the Full Governing Board and Alison Guzman as an Associate to the Children, Families and Community committee. We also welcomed Kate Laidlaw as our new clerk.

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, Kate Laidlaw, at clerktogovernors@eastsheen.richmond.sch.uk