

# Governors' Newsletter



Year 1 Living Tree Map

## Message from the Chair

A belated welcome to the 2018/2019 academic year! We've re-jigged the timing of our newsletters so that you aren't overloaded with communications at any point in the calendar. Hopefully this will allow you to better digest all that we have to communicate. Following feedback from the parent community, we've also reduced the length of this newsletter. Our goal remains to convey some of the details around our current priorities and to communicate the school's many successes as well as some of the challenges that we're facing.

Following Raz Khan's retirement at the end of last summer, I now have the responsibility of serving as our Chair. The role of governor is a voluntary one and it is my pleasure to work alongside a dedicated group of individuals from different walks of life, with a variety of skills and range of experiences who all contribute to supporting our school. Being a governor at East Sheen Primary School is all about working for the children in our community. As a board, we endeavour to ensure that each and every child has a happy and productive experience during their time here, so that they leave us as confident, creative and conscientious individuals, who have developed a love of and enthusiasm for learning and life that they will carry with them into the next phase of their education and beyond.

One of the highlights of the role is the time that we spend in school and I am always impressed by how welcoming, self-assured and inquisitive our pupils are. We are extremely proud of them, not only of their fantastic academic achievements (more on this later in the newsletter) and successes in an extensive range of extracurricular activities, but also of how they evolve and mature as individuals. We witness our brilliant staff in action, who excel at making learning fun as well as the ceaseless passion, determination and leadership displayed by our Headship Team.

As governors, our core functions are to work with the Headship Team to ensure the school's clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction and to hold the Headteacher to account for the school's educational, financial and organisational performance. To do this, we collate and evaluate a significant amount of evidence from a variety of sources. We can't share it all in a single newsletter, but I will offer up one statistic: 100% of our Year 6 leavers consistently report that they would recommend East Sheen Primary School to others. A ringing endorsement!

Helen Wrigglesworth, Chair of Governors

# Wellbeing Award for Schools

Positive mental health is a key focus and many initiatives and curriculum areas promote pupil wellbeing. A wide range of interventions, from friendship groups and self-esteem programmes to 1:1 mentoring, take place as outreach from our fantastic Phoenix Room.

Relationships between staff and children and between the children themselves have been highlighted as strengths throughout the school and these are critical to a safe and happy learning environment. The headship team invited the school nurse, Emily Kelly, to run fortnightly clinics on a Monday morning after drop off and we are delighted to hear that many parents have visited Emily to discuss various issues. Emily gives advice, practical strategies and reassurance. She can also sign-post parents to support networks



*Emily Kelly, School Nurse*

or relevant experts where necessary. Emily has also delivered a parent talk on dealing with anxiety.

The school is currently involved in an NHS led pilot scheme to explore how positive mental health can be promoted through the school community. As with all initiatives, a whole school

approach has a greater chance of success.

The Governing Body is fully behind promoting the positive mental health of all stakeholders, and this includes our staff. We are mindful of teacher workload, a new OFSTED focus, and consider impact on learning when making decisions about school priorities. If teacher workload is very high and impact on learning low, we agree that changes should be made. We have very dedicated teachers in our school and we want to keep them! Recruitment and retention are nationwide problems, but we continue to attract and keep high calibre teachers and support staff. The school's leaders have always embraced creativity, professional development and collaboration - and we understand that teachers like that!

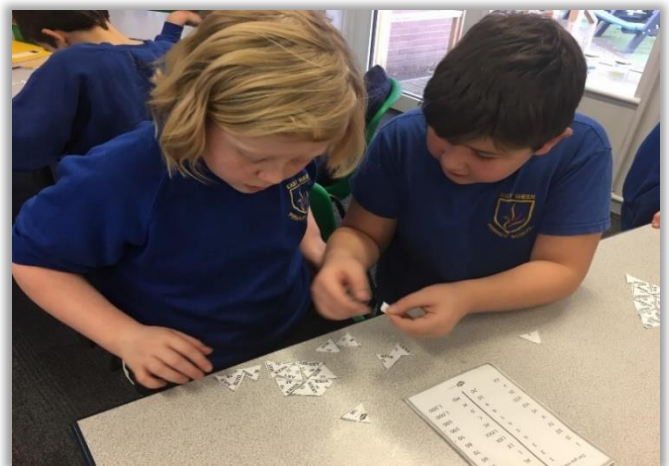
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## Results

The governors were extremely pleased and impressed with the results achieved in national tests in 2018. These clearly show that East Sheen Primary continues to provide an excellent academic education for all our children, whatever their abilities and needs. Overall, the school was ranked as the (equal) sixth highest attaining school in Richmond, itself the highest-performing borough in the country. This is to be celebrated.

Last year's leavers exceeded our expectations. Particularly impressive were the Key Stage 2 results in Maths where it is evident that children are really being pushed to achieve the best that they can. There has also been significant improvement in writing, both at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 1, which was a school priority last year.

The data reflects the hard work and application shown by the children, of course, but also the incredible dedication and professionalism of their teachers throughout the school and the quality of leadership



*Year 4 pupils engaging in a maths activity*

demonstrated by the Headship Team. As governors, we regularly observe lessons and walk around the school to monitor the progress and effectiveness of our school development plan. We are consistently impressed by the overall learning environment, the standards of behaviour shown by the children in all year groups, and

the high expectations that the school sets and reinforces in this regard. It is worth noting that our School Improvement Partner who visits the school every term is also consistently impressed by the quality of teaching and behaviour at East Sheen Primary.

There are always areas for improvement, however, and we have worked with the Headship Team to identify a number of focus areas for this academic year, including inferencing skills in reading, and ratios/proportions in maths. Similarly, we are keen to ensure that the excellent initiatives put in place last year, particularly with respect to writing, are firmly embedded and built upon.

The governors recognise how important academic attainment and progress are to the education of our children, and we were pleased to attend the Headship Team's recent presentation and explanation of the school's academic results to parents. This also served as a good opportunity to emphasise that education reaches beyond the results and the data, and to stress the value that the school places on nurturing children that are happy, curious, resilient and kind.

If you would like to know more about the academic standards and expectations at ESPS, the governors recently produced a "FAQ" document giving a lot more information. This can be accessed by clicking [\[here\]](#).

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## Curriculum



*Year 4 pupils designing Anderson air raid shelters*

As governors, we are tasked with ensuring that a rich, diverse and appropriate curriculum is taught throughout the school that taps into all children's natural interests. This is now a major focus of Ofsted. We consider this a major strength of ESPS and have never compromised our curriculum to try to achieve even higher results in Reading, Writing and Maths.

The school promotes an immersive curriculum, with theme days, workshops and school trips giving children real experiences to deepen and develop their understanding of the different curriculum areas. As one of many examples, ESPS dedicates considerable time to whole school community music and have been awarded gold status by the Sing-Up Foundation. Through our Thinking School philosophy, we also promote critical thinking, tolerance, celebration of

difference, identity and a sense of self-worth and community both in children and teaching staff.

Strong emphasis is placed on the importance of history, geography, art and design technology, computing\* and physical activity, which together demonstrate the foundation of primary school learning. Such enriching subjects and focus areas enable children to build on their prior knowledge and understanding and develop skills to equip them for life beyond primary education.



*Year 4 creating more Anderson air raid shelters!*

\* Thank you, parents, for our iPad trolleys funded by PTA; these are an invaluable resource!



# Air Pollution and Road Safety

We are reassured that monitoring data gathered thus far indicates that our boundary wall and lovely green wall addition (thank you again, PTA!) are an effective barrier against the pollution generated on the A205. Plans are afoot to install shielding at the gate locations and we are currently researching the best solution for this.

The school has extended its pollution monitoring scheme and monitoring devices (NOx diffusion tubes) are positioned at numerous locations around the school, in classrooms and in the playgrounds. The Headship Team continues to work closely with the council's environmental officers and the school will shortly be taking part in a pollution monitoring project with experts at Kings College London to quantify exposure to a range of pollutants and identify further mitigation strategies.

Sadly, air pollution is a problem across London and we think it's important for the community to recognise that in our locality, the greatest exposure anyone is likely to experience will most probably occur whilst travelling on the South Circular or surrounding busy roads to work, to school or the shops. Here are some ways that you can reduce your exposure when travelling to and from school:

- When walking, cycling or scooting: use a route that avoids busy roads. This may increase your length of journey, but using quieter roads reduces exposure
- Walk, cycle or scoot to school. Exposure to air pollution is reported as being higher inside cars
- Don't idle
- Enter/leave school by the closest entrance and keep off the road as long as possible
- Use the Sheen Playground "pen" in the mornings and please make space for others to get off the pavement and away from the road
- Keep away from the kerbside. It's safer too

We attended a meeting with our local MP, Zac Goldsmith, along with members of the council's transport team, representatives from TfL and local parents to discuss road safety outside school and in particular at the zebra crossing at the top end of Kings Road. There have been a number of accidents at this crossing and whilst there are both short and long term plans to improve safety here, we would suggest families avoid using this crossing and instead use the pelican crossing at Grosvenor Gardens to travel to and from school.



It was also highlighted that most accidents are attributable to motorists or cyclists ignoring the rules of the road. If you witness motorists or cyclists behaving dangerously, illegally or antisocially, then consider reporting it using the **RoadSafe London** online [tool](#). Every report helps the police and TfL to understand where and when bad road user behaviour takes place and informs the activity of the police and partners in prioritising actions.

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## Finance

At the end of the Autumn Term, we brought to your attention the public SEND Futures consultation. All councils are experiencing funding difficulties in their High Needs Blocks, with virtually all accruing high levels of debt in this area. It is possible that funding will be diverted from the main Schools Block to address the ongoing High Needs deficit – just one area of financial uncertainty under which schools are operating.

Both Wandsworth and Richmond Boroughs have in recent years experienced a decline in birth rates which, compounded by a stagnant property market, has contributed to a fall in demand in our locality for school places. This might be a temporary Brexit blip, but as you may know, funding is determined on a per capita basis: unfilled places leave holes in our budget.

The school operates a tight ship when it comes to finances, employing strategies that have left us in a healthy financial situation to date, but this situation can change quickly. With these pressures in mind:

### “WE NEED YOU”!

We are looking for members of our community who would be willing to volunteer their time to work with the school to identify and apply for bids and grants that would help support the school. You will need some time on your hands and previous bid-writing experience would be of benefit but not essential. If you think you can help then please get in touch with the school office at [info@eastsheen.richmond.sch.uk](mailto:info@eastsheen.richmond.sch.uk) asap.

# Safeguarding

Safeguarding is the most fundamental responsibility that must be fulfilled by those who work and volunteer at East Sheen Primary. It is something that every member of our community contributes to and should be aware of: staff, parents, volunteers and carers. All governors take this responsibility incredibly seriously and understand the importance of promoting the welfare of our children to enable a safe, happy and nurturing environment in which they are secure to learn and grow as individuals.

Every Autumn the Safeguarding Link Governors participate in a major audit in conjunction with the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead - Liz Page) and deputy (Debbie Canner). As part of this and other mini-audits conducted throughout the year we gather evidence by talking to members of staff, the children and parents, as well as by reviewing relevant policies and procedures.

The most recent audit incorporates topics relevant to the updates to Keeping Children Safe in Education, released in September 2018. New additions to this audit focused on an awareness of wellbeing and mental health amongst staff, the children, parents and carers. The achievement of the Wellbeing Mark is high on the school's priority list.

Another key area of focus is E-Safety. E-Safety is taught through the curriculum and parents are made aware of E-Safety through annual seminars. Information relating to E-Safety is regularly updated and uploaded onto the school website.

The school has a responsibility to promote child protection and the safeguarding of children through the National Curriculum. The Jigsaw PSHE scheme of work is employed throughout the school, covering self-esteem, anti-bullying, racism, homophobia and relationships.

The Governing Body was extremely reassured by the recent audit and is confident that everything is being done by the senior leadership team to ensure that our children feel safe and are kept safe.

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## School Lunches

We are delighted with the improvements to our school lunches since Accent were appointed as our school caterers at the beginning of the academic year. From day one the children were excited by the beautiful presentation of the food; it also tastes delicious!

We are very pleased that there has been an increase in the numbers of both children and adults choosing school lunches. At lunchtime, all children are encouraged to enjoy their lunch in a social environment where they show respect to their fellow diners by moving around the dining room sensibly, using appropriate speaking voices and taking care to clear away their plates and cutlery. Respect tokens can be won for demonstrating these actions.

If parents or carers would like to join their child to sample school lunches, then please contact Marie Hambridge in the school office via

[info@eastsheen.richmond.sch.uk](mailto:info@eastsheen.richmond.sch.uk) to make your reservation. Bon appetit!

More information available [here](#).



*Salad bar and freshly baked bread*

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# Unsung Heroes



We would like to say a huge thank you to two parents, Katerina Kalaizidou and Alison Scott, who volunteered to support children who had joined the school in Y1 with little or no English. Their past teaching experiences and ability to communicate in English and other languages have supported the smooth transition to our school for

these children who have quickly become part of our community, and are amazing us with the progress they have already made with their understanding of the English language. Thank you! And thank you to all parent volunteers - your contribution to the school is invaluable and much appreciated.

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## Governor Information

We particularly want to thank Raz Khan for his 19 years of service as a governor and his enduring dedication to the lives of the children who passed through our school during his tenure. We also wish to thank Susannah Milligan who is succeeded as Vice Chair by Nathalie Townley. Susannah remains on the board and

continues to bring a wealth of knowledge, experience and perspective to our discussions.

We welcome Seb Keany, a management accountant at KPMG, and Ravindhi Murphy, an oncologist, to our board, together with Claire Bracey who has joined us as our staff member.

A wealth of information about our governing board, who we are and how we work, is available on our website [here](#).

If you'd like to find out more about any of our activities or are perhaps interested in becoming a governor yourself and supporting the school, then we would love to hear from you. You can get in touch with us via our clerk at: [clerktogovernors@eastsheen.richmond.sch.uk](mailto:clerktogovernors@eastsheen.richmond.sch.uk).