

Governors' Newsletter



Message from the Chair

With the 2019/2020 academic year under full swing, a stellar performance by ESPS pupils in their KS2 SATS and the Wellbeing Award for Schools under our belt, this is a great opportunity to recognise and applaud our excellent staff who make it all happen.

We are absolutely thrilled with the brilliant KS2 results and Wellbeing Award and they are just desserts for the children and staff who have worked so hard to achieve them. It is important to realise that there is significant substance behind the attainments and “gongs” and that absolutely central to the progress and many achievements of pupils, are our staff. We are incredibly fortunate to have passionate and talented teachers and support staff and we highly value and appreciate the work that they do. These individuals nurture our children, enabling them to develop an



Staff looking happy, if tired, after enjoying a workout with Joe Wicks

appreciation of the people and world around them, helping them to overcome their anxieties, realise their ambitions and develop a love for learning that we hope will continue for life. From a governor's perspective it seems that ever more demands are placed on the teaching profession, which makes it all the more important that we celebrate, champion and support our teachers, enabling them to enjoy their work and to do their job to the best of their abilities, whilst also leading balanced and fulfilling lives - the sort of role models that we want for our children. It can perhaps be best reduced to this: happy teachers = happy pupils.

Carrying on with the theme of happy pupils, it is always a genuine pleasure spending time in school, hearing directly from pupils about the many exciting topics that they are studying and the varied experiences they are enjoying most at school. The Reception, KS1 and KS2 Christmas Productions in particular were absolute treats and whilst everyone involved should be congratulated, special mention must go to our very own member of staff, Gail Hankin, who wrote the KS2 production “Eco Elves”. It was a splendid and song-filled finale to the Autumn Term.



On behalf of all of the governors, I wish you a very happy Spring Term.

Helen Wrigglesworth, Chair of Governors

Wellbeing

This term, we were delighted to be awarded the Wellbeing Award for Schools, an award that recognises the embedded culture of promoting emotional wellbeing and positive mental health. The school was praised for its holistic and committed approach to pupil and staff wellbeing and the accreditation included tours of the school, interviews with staff, parents and pupils, and presentations from the Wellbeing Faculty and Headteacher. The accreditors were particularly impressed with how passionately the children were able to speak about what makes our school such a special, safe and happy place, citing its amazing people: teachers, children, helpers and parents. We couldn't agree more!



Harry Page sharing his Christmas lunch with pupils

All classrooms use a 'Time to Talk' box, where children are encouraged to share, explore and celebrate their feelings. Emotional health is covered in lessons and children can highlight ways to support their emotional wellbeing and that of those around them. The Phoenix Mile is a great way for the children to improve wellbeing through exercise in a fun, sociable way; it has now been included as a playtime option for all children in KS1 and is supported by the team of Year 6 Buddies, who support younger children at playtimes, teaching games, problem-solving skills and providing a friendly face from the juniors. We are pleased to have trained mental health first-aiders in the school and a number of staff completed qualifications in children's mental health last year.

The school also recognises that happy staff are integral to the wellbeing of the whole community. In partnership with Achieving for Children, the school ran mindfulness workshops with staff, and governor learning walks show what a motivated, exceptionally talented staff we have, who underpin excellence in learning and achievement. There is a wonderful, supportive system in the staffing structure and you only have to walk past the staffroom on a Friday morning to hear the buzz and laughter coming from the weekly meeting, where staff share successes from the week and take turns treating each other to breakfast. The staff very much enjoyed their Secret Santa celebration, in support of the charity Crisis and are now working off the holiday pounds with Miss Swift's staff fitness sessions!

More information about wellbeing at ESPS is available [here](#) on the website.

Learning Across The Curriculum

The Governing Body was delighted to see the superb results that the school achieved in last year's KS2 SATS tests. These well exceeded the high expectations that the Headship Team and the governors had set for the academic year and reflect an enormous amount of hard work and dedication by the teachers and – of course – the children. While we recognise that test results are not the be all and end all for any school, they are a good indicator of its academic health, and we are confident that the school is providing an extremely high quality of education for all our children, whatever their strengths and needs. It is certainly something to celebrate that ESPS children show the highest maths



Learning AND having fun

progress of any school in Richmond, itself the highest performing borough in the country.



Wall building at Butser Farm

We also recognise, however, that children are only tested nationally in a small number of 'core' subject areas – reading, writing and maths – and that education, in particular primary education, presents

wonderful opportunities to expose children to a wide range of subjects and interests beyond these core areas. At East Sheen Primary School we have always been keen to ensure that the curriculum is as broad as it is deep, and that subjects such as geography and history, as well as science, languages and music, are given as much focus as the core subjects. Keeping this breadth is a particular focus for this academic year and beyond, and the school will continue to look for ways to bring environmental issues into focus across the curriculum.

It is also of course important that success in national tests does not come at the expense of the wellbeing either of children or the staff, and the governors are pleased to support the school's focus on mental health and wellbeing so that ESPS is able to continue to produce happy, confident children who are well-equipped for the challenges ahead.

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

EAL Focus (English as an Additional Language)

Our school is made up of a diverse community and we are very proud of the richness of cultures, faiths and backgrounds that exist – one of the factors that makes our school a special place. Amongst our pupils, 42 different languages are spoken, meaning 30% of the cohort are learning in a second language (EAL).

Some children's proficiency level will be 'New to English', while others will be fluent with varying levels in between. To support learners, our teachers use visual aids alongside the verbal curriculum. Interactive whiteboards are used very effectively. Thinking maps particularly support EAL learners, providing a familiar visual with which to access curriculum content, allowing children to organise their thinking before recording in more formal written English. Older children use technology to access translation apps to support them in class.

Our writing process allows opportunities for talk, drama and planning before writing. Writing is modelled and children are provided with appropriate vocabulary, useful phrases or sentence starters.

Collaborative learning in small groups or pairs also supports learning and language development. Bilingual children are paired with children who are new to English and we use our multilingual staff to support communication, particularly in the first few weeks of school until the routines of school are understood.

Progress in language acquisition is tracked as the children move through the school; it is amazing and rewarding to see how quickly our children pick up the new language and are able to fully engage in the curriculum.

Teacher Focus

ESPS was delighted to welcome three new teachers to the school in September 2019, Emily Goodwin, Year 4 (EG), Abigail Pennington, Year 2 (AP) and Helena Vardy, Year 5 (HV). Here, they tell us a little about themselves and share some of their thoughts about their first experiences at East Sheen Primary School!

Can you tell us a bit about yourself?

EG: I have been a teacher for 6 years now. I studied at St. Mary's University, and grew up in Twickenham.

AP: I grew up near Brighton and moved to London when I came to study Primary Education at Roehampton University. I love this part of London and enjoy shopping in Kingston and going to Richmond Park!

HV: I grew up in Hampshire. At 18, I did some travelling and then went to the University of Exeter where I studied Psychology and Animal Behaviour. After graduating, I worked in events for a few years before studying to become a teacher at St Mary's University in Twickenham.

What has your first term at East Sheen Primary been like?

EG: My first term at ESPS has been great. It has been very interesting getting to know a new school and all of the children and staff.

AP: My first term has been wonderful at East Sheen Primary and I have really enjoyed getting to know the school community.

HV: I have absolutely loved my first term at East Sheen. The staff and parents are fantastic and so supportive and the children are brilliant.



Emily Goodwin



Abigail Pennington



Helena Vardy

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

EG: I have enjoyed the welcoming and friendly atmosphere from the staff and parents here at ESPS.

AP: My favourite moment so far has been our ten class treat, where we wore our DJs and watched a movie. I also really enjoyed our Christmas carol concert and festivities!

HV: Working with such a great team of people who are so keen to help and support one another. Other highlights include Year 5 Viking Day, the Joe Wicks whole school workout and the Christmas festivities.

Describe East Sheen Primary in three words?

EG: Welcoming, understanding and fun!

AP: Kind, enthusiastic and ambitious

HV: Community, creative and welcoming

Tell us a fun fact about yourself?

EG: I have a fluffy cat called Timmy!

AP: I love to make people smile!

HV: I have taught in both Peru and Australia.

Air Quality

We continue to take the issue of air quality very seriously. Since the last Governor Newsletter, the results of the Breathe London Wearables Study, carried out by experts from King's College London, have been published. East Sheen Primary was one of five schools that participated in the study.

For all participating schools, the most significant exposure to air pollution was found to occur whilst travelling to and from school. This is something that we can all take action to mitigate against and as such we continue to reiterate the following advice:

- *When walking, cycling or scooting, use a route that avoids busy roads*
- *Walk, cycle or scoot to school. Exposure to air pollution can be 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*
- *Keep away from the kerbside. It's safer too!*

The school's ongoing nitrogen dioxide monitoring project continues to show pollution levels in the playgrounds remain comfortably below the $40\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ legal threshold and that levels in the classrooms are



Monitoring backpack in action on the astro

significantly lower – below those recorded at Holly Lodge in Richmond Park! This is despite the Hammersmith Bridge closure and subsequent traffic disruption.

The school continues to work with the council's environmental officers and other relevant parties to seek out and identify further mitigation strategies and is working with the local authority to promote their anti-idling campaign.

Air pollution is a problem across London and it's important for our 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 other busy roads to get to work, to school or to the shops. We continue to promote awareness so that individuals can make informed choices about how they travel and take steps to reduce their exposure.

Finance

It is a mixed bag to report from a financial perspective. As many of you will appreciate, the government's promise of an increase in funding for education comes as a significant relief. For many years the financial landscape for schools across the country has become increasingly bleak. What we do not know is when and how this funding will be released to schools and as such cannot yet plan for increased expenditure over and above our current budget. This means that we continue to feel the pinch and there is also continuing financial pressure on the Council's High Needs Funding Block that is leaving some services strained.



On a more positive note, we are delighted to report that this year's Reception is full and currently has a waiting list and that Year 1, which started out low on numbers back in September 2018, is now at nearly full capacity. As funding is allocated annually on a per capita basis, this significantly improves our future financial outlook.

We remain hugely grateful to the brilliant PTA and our wider community for their continued support of the school. Every donation counts and helps to provide the state-of-the-art resources and learning spaces that support the education of children in our school. We would like to encourage parents/carers to keep using the Easyfundraising portal when

purchasing online from retailers. Further details about the service can be found [here](#).

Another way of increasing donations is for individuals in our community to make use of matched funding. Many companies offer some form of matched funding to their employees. If you are fundraising for PTA events or donating to the school, participating companies will pledge to match a sum of money relating to the amount of money that you have raised or donated to the PTA (which is a registered charity).

You will however need to find out from your employee whether they operate such a scheme.

Finally, we would like to thank parent Alex Reekie, who responded to the appeal in our last newsletter for help in identifying and submitting applications for funds and grants to support the school. This is no small task as there are a huge number of grants and funds available, often with strings attached and a lot of small print to digest. Thank you, Alex!

Safeguarding

At East Sheen Primary School, our pupils' welfare is of paramount concern. The Governing Body works to ensure that our school safeguards and promotes the welfare of all its pupils. The school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is reviewed annually in the Autumn Term and is available to read on the school website. More information about safeguarding at East Sheen Primary is available [here](#) on the website. You can also find useful tips on e-safety that complement the annual e-safety talk for parents on the website [here](#).

The two designated Safeguarding Governors at ESPS are Helen Wrigglesworth (Chair) and Lindsey Kavanagh. Recently, Helen and Lindsey met with Mrs Page (who is the Designated Safeguarding Lead) and Mrs Canner (Deputy Safeguarding Lead) to conduct the annual Safeguarding Audit. This is followed up with monitoring visits in both the Spring and Autumn Terms.



Liz and Debbie

At the last Full Governing Board meeting, governors were asked to sit a short test to help ensure that their knowledge of the school's safeguarding policy and Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance was up to scratch. You'll be reassured to learn that everyone passed!



Lindsey and Helen

Governor Information

We're delighted to welcome some new members to our team. Harry Page joins as staff governor and Carol Hawkins and Helen Haworth as co-opted governors, while Jess Zayouna has become a full governor after a year as an associate.

You can find out more about the work of the Governing Body and about all the ESPS governors on the school 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 via our clerk at: clerktogovernors@eastsheen.richmond.sch.uk.



Clockwise from top: Harry, Jess, Helen and Carol