

# Governors' Newsletter



## Message from the Chair

East Sheen Primary has not stood still for a moment during the pandemic. There have been challenges left, right and centre, but despite that, our passionate and dedicated staff, wonderful pupils and supportive parents and carers have helped ensure that learning and wellbeing have continued to take centre stage, whether in school or at home.

This newsletter comes to you out of sync with our normal communications. However, we were very pleased to recently communicate the appointment of Deborah Canner as our new headteacher, when Liz Page retires at the end of this academic year.

Debbie's appointment has been warmly received by the whole community and the Governing Body is very confident that Debbie will continue to build on the great work done by Liz, ensuring that every pupil remains at the heart of decision making at ESPS and that the values and inclusive culture that make our school so special will continue to thrive.



*The trim trail has many uses*

Members of the Governing Body really enjoy and appreciate the time we are able to spend in school with staff and pupils. It is a key part of what enables us to ensure that the decisions and strategic direction we take are pupil driven and evidence based. It was important that we were able to carry out the selection process for our new headteacher in school and in person (hurrah – not a Zoom or Teams meeting in sight!) and it also proved a useful opportunity for us to see how pupils are coping with the return to school. We frequently discuss behaviour for learning and it was absolutely fantastic to see just how quickly pupils have settled back into their normal classroom routines. It was also brilliant to watch pupils having fun in the playground, clearly enormously happy to be back in school with their friends and teachers.

It is of course frustrating and difficult for families when bubble closures mean that pupils have to return to home learning, but you can be reassured that the school has recently received great feedback from our School Improvement Partner about the quality of the remote learning offer and how well it has been specifically developed to meet a wide range of situations and needs.



Looking ahead, we continue to be ambitious for every pupil, focussing on maximising progress using all means available, whilst working to ensure that all our pupils continue to develop a love of learning, pandemic or no pandemic!

Helen Wigglesworth

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# Teaching and learning in a pandemic

The excitement of children, parents and teachers alike was palpable when ESPS welcomed back all its pupils in September 2020. Teaching staff across the year groups worked hard to transition the children back into school routines, re-establish the expected behaviour for learning and identify any gaps caused by the extended school closure.

With the benefit of the Government's 'catch-up funding', teaching hours were increased and two new Teaching Assistants recruited to run small group and 1:1 targeted interventions. The aim is to ensure that key concepts are understood to enable progress and to enhance future learning. The Teaching & Learning Committee were thrilled to hear that these interventions had an immediate impact, with Year 2 achieving brilliant results in their postponed Phonics check.



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## Microsoft Teams

Although we all desperately hoped that schools would remain open and there would be no need to revert to Remote Learning, extensive planning went on behind the scenes. Teachers received training on the use of Microsoft Teams as a teaching platform and the children also practised using Teams in school so that they would be familiar with it should they need to use it.

As most children were required to stay at home after the Christmas break, the use of Teams allowed a wider and deeper home learning provision, enabled children to have that all-important human connection with their teachers, and ensured that safeguarding was prioritised.

Governors were impressed by the extremely high quality of remote teaching, and by the flexibility shown as in-school lessons also had to be provided for the children of key workers. We were also enormously impressed by the resilience shown by the children (and by their

parents/carers) who had to work out new routines and new ways to learn, and how to juggle work and family life with the school curriculum. The levels of engagement were fantastic and everyone really pulled together.



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## Remote learning using Microsoft Teams

ESPS worked very hard to ensure that children were able to access the teaching provided, and the school was able to provide laptops from several sources to families where a number of children had previously been sharing devices.

Governors would like to thank the whole school community - teachers, parents and children - for how positively they reacted during a very difficult period. We are also encouraged by how excited the children are to be back in school and the progress being made by all.

Andrew Miller and Nathalie Townley



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## Back in the classroom

If you would like to find out more about remote learning at ESPS, please click [here](#).

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



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# Community Spirit

**Community:** a group of people who care about each other and feel they belong together.

Being part of a community supports us so we are not alone - and during lockdown the wonderful ESPS community took responsibility for each other, and kindness and generosity of spirit shone out. Becky Webster has been a dazzling example of this spirit! When Becky trained in events coordination as part of her management qualification, she certainly did not anticipate coordinating activities during a pandemic, but her skills and goodwill have proved invaluable. Equipped with tick lists, she has ensured that all cleaning materials and PPE have been available, that signs



*Becky Webster*

are where they need to be, and that food hampers, parcels and turkeys have been distributed, often by her personally. Becky also ensured that laptops were assigned and set up for children who needed them and became a technical expert, offering support and advice to families on how to access the home learning platforms. Her latest list checks that staff have the lateral flow tests they need and that their results are appropriately recorded twice a week. She has even been spotted cleaning the car park mirrors! Thank you, Becky!

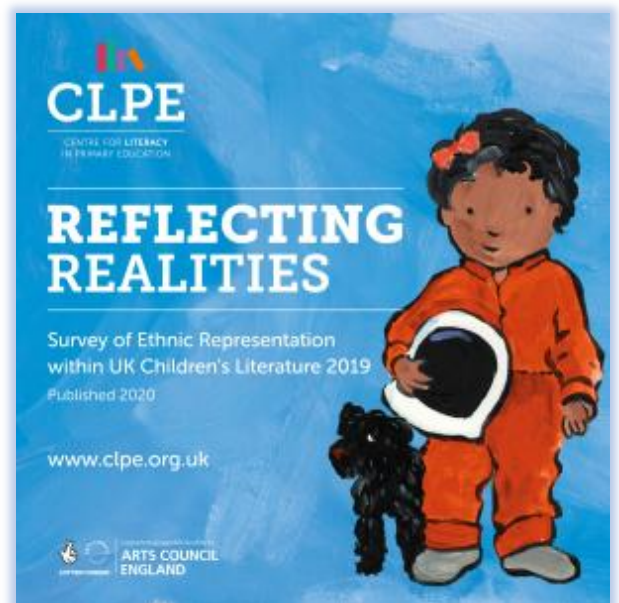
Liz Page

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## Reading at ESPS – Reflecting Realities

ESPS has long celebrated both diversity and love of reading, but recently readers may have noticed some exciting new reading materials. The 'Reflecting Realities' study, run with Achieving for Children and the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education, examined the extent and quality of ethnic representation and diversity in children's publishing in the UK. Alarming, only 7% of children's books published between 2017 and 2019 feature characters from a Black, Asian or minority ethnic background. In 2019, 33.5% of the UK primary school population were of minority ethnic origins; in stark contrast, only 5% of children's books had an ethnic minority main character.

We've worked hard this year with publishers, retailers and charities to ensure that our texts represent the school's diverse make-up. We've updated class stories and the reading curriculum, and teachers and students alike are enjoying these new titles. Why is this work so important? Research shows that reading for pleasure in childhood has more impact on future life chances than any other factor (OECD, 2002). To be a successful reader, a child needs to connect with the material and see themselves in the text. Staff and governors are committed to improving the progress of all pupils in reading. This is another exciting step on that journey.



*Reflecting Realities*

Harry Page

If you would like to find out more about reading at ESPS, please visit our website [here](#).

# New Faces

ESPS was delighted to welcome some new teachers this year. We asked three of them, Miss Allen (LA), Mrs Delgado (MD) and Mr Samuel (MS), some questions to get to know them!

Can you tell us a bit of background about yourself?

**LA:** I grew up in Warrington and studied philosophy at Lancaster University. I'd always wanted to be a teacher and I moved to London after completing my PGCE.

**MD:** I grew up in Tarragona, Spain, where I studied Primary Education at University. I did a semester at John Moores University in Liverpool and a placement in a British school.

**MS:** I've been a teacher for six years. Before that I was a guitarist in a speed metal band and a public policy researcher on the side.

How was your first term at East Sheen Primary?

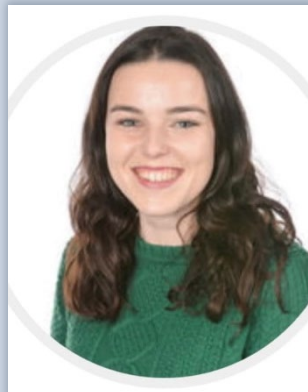
**LA:** I absolutely loved my first term and felt very welcomed into the school community by staff, parents and children alike.

**MD:** My first term was great! I enjoyed getting to know the school, the parents and the fantastic Year 1s.

**MS:** I very much enjoyed my first term. The whole school – and, in particular, the Year 6 team – was incredibly welcoming and supportive.



*Miss Allen*



*Mrs Delgado*



*Mr Samuel*

And, in comparison, how are you finding term two, lockdown and distance teaching?

**LA:** It's definitely different! I'm very much missing being in school with all the children but am still managing to feel well connected whilst on this strange learning curve.

**MD:** Term two has been quite different. I'm missing teaching in-person and seeing the children, but I'm very proud of how resilient everyone is and the amazing work they are doing.

**MS:** It's certainly different, but I've been extremely impressed with the attitude and resilience of the pupils – they're a credit to the school.

Describe ESPS in three words

**LA:** Welcoming, committed and fun!

**MD:** Creative, fun and enthusiastic.

**MS:** Aspirational. Organised. Fun.

Tell us a fun fact about yourself

**LA:** I love live music! It's one of the things I've missed most over the last year

**MD:** I love horse riding, and I've been doing it for over 15 years now.

**MS:** When I was three years old, the only language I could speak was Welsh.

In the next newsletter we'll feature our other new teachers Miss Linter, Mrs Robinson, Mr Shaw and Mrs De Souza.

Jess Zayouna

*Happy | Curious | Resilient | Kind*

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# Air Quality

The school continues to use diffusion tubes to monitor the levels of Nitrogen Oxides present in the air in and around the school. Results continue to show pollution levels in the playgrounds and classrooms remain well below the  $40\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  legal threshold. Previous studies have also shown particulate levels to be well below legal thresholds.

Greatest exposure to air pollution will occur whilst travelling on the South Circular or on other busy roads to get to work, to school or to the shops. It is important that we continue to promote awareness so that individuals in our community can make informed choices about how they travel.

We reiterate the following advice when travelling to and from school:



*Putney playground entrance*

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- *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*
- *Keep away from the kerbside. It's safer too!*

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# Finance

This has been a year of tremendous financial turmoil and we've had to adapt to the many operational changes necessitated by the pandemic and the consequent school closures.

In addition to the ongoing management of the school's finances, we've had to provide extra laptops for home learning and additional cleaning to keep our facilities safe. We've employed additional staff and paid for more hours from existing employees to help pupils as they return to a 'normal' school environment. We've worked with our caterers to ensure meals were available whenever we were open.

Most of these costs have been covered by government support we've received, like all schools, via the local authority.



We've been unable to spend some of the monies we had budgeted for resources and equipment this year. As a result, we expect to show a small surplus in this year's accounts which will add to our carry forward reserve!

This will of course be offset next year as we catch up with much of that spending. Moreover, because of the relocation of families during Covid, pupil numbers are now lower across the school, leading to a slight fall in income. This means we start our financial year projecting a small budget deficit. But, as already mentioned, this will be funded by the uplifted reserve we carry forward.

We are, we hope, now looking forward to a year of financial (and educational) stability.

Graham Dyer



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# Parent/Carer Satisfaction Survey 2021

The school governors operate a continual programme of dialogue with the school community. The Parent/Carer Satisfaction Survey is one of several methods used to capture feedback and we place great importance on your responses. The survey findings contribute to policy and direct actions within the school, and these are published in the Governors' Newsletter and on the school web site.

It has been completed annually since 2005 and provides invaluable year-on-year comparative feedback which the governors analyse and evaluate.

Due to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, the governors decided that conducting the survey would be inappropriate in Summer 2020, being an extra task for busy parents and with little value as a year-on-year comparison.

The survey will be reinstated this year, scheduled for the end of the first half of the summer term, and we very much look forward to your responses.

Chris Styles

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## Governor Information

We are very pleased to welcome Nicky Dorman and Rupert Brown as new members of the Governing Board, and Emily Maltby as an associate to the Teaching and Learning Committee. They bring a wealth of skills and experience as well as huge enthusiasm and passion for the role, which will be put to good use in support of the school. You can find out more about them on our website [here](#).



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*Rupert Brown, Emily Maltby and Nicky Dorman*

We say good-bye and a big thank you to Seb Keany, Simon Hegarty and Helen Haworth. Their contributions have been hugely appreciated and we wish them all the best in their future endeavours.

There are currently two vacancies for Parent Governor posts at ESPS. The formal process of notification of vacancies and the election is scheduled for the first half of the summer term. The election will take place through an online system with a paper option available for those parents who do not have online access.

Active and engaged parent representation on the governing body has always been a strength at ESPS and we encourage parents to think about putting themselves forward.

More information about the work of the governing body can be found on the school website [here](#). You can also get in touch with us via our clerk at:

[clerktogovernors@eastsheen.richmond.sch.uk](mailto:clerktogovernors@eastsheen.richmond.sch.uk).