

# Emmbrook Junior School Newsletter

Friday 16<sup>th</sup> July 2021

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## Message from Mr Usher



**What an incredibly busy week!** This week the children represented themselves brilliantly when we had our Governing Body in school for the first time in over a year. The Governors spent time walking around the school (following our Covid-19 guidelines of course); talking to children (at a social distance); watching teaching and learning taking place; refamiliarising themselves with the school grounds and generally getting a really good feel for how the school is doing. Whilst I was obviously confident that the children and staff would of course show what is going on at the school brilliantly, one can't help but be nervous. I had no cause for concern, as always, the children were articulate and joyful, although their request for a 2-day week and 1-hour breaktimes with 2-hour lunchtimes are unlikely to be granted! **The governors perform an important role** holding myself and the school to account and leading the school's strategic vision. It is a challenging and unpaid role and so I would like to thank them for their support as the role they perform is vital.

**We also had our sports day this week.** This was the first time I had seen a sports day in action at Emmbrook Junior School and I must praise the organisation of Mr Fisher, as well as the enthusiasm and support of the rest of the staff. The event ran as smoothly as any sports day I've ever seen and I'm only sorry that we weren't able to safely accommodate parents this time. Hopefully next year we will be able to have parents enjoy the occasion with us. What impressed me most is that as well as being a proper competitive sports day, the children were able to fully participate with all the children joining all the field events. Well done to all the Houses: **1<sup>st</sup> – Kingfishers;** **2<sup>nd</sup> Redstarts;** **3<sup>rd</sup> Hummingbirds;** **4<sup>th</sup> Golden Eagles.**

**Year 3 were also able to enjoy a trip to the farm this week.** I'm told it was muddy but lots of fun as well as being a valuable learning experience.

**We have also had a work experience student in school this week from Mary Hare School for the Deaf.** As we have three pupils moving to Mary Hare in September it has been a wonderful opportunity for them to prepare for this transition.

**I am so pleased to be able to congratulate one of our Year 6 children, Camron Mpofu,** who this week signed for Reading FC after a 6-week trial. Camron has played for the Wokingham District side the past 2 years playing at a very high level, travelling all over the south of England. Camron was selected as one of the best 12 players out of all 40 Wokingham Primary/Junior schools. This season he was nominated and won player of the season from Wokingham District Primary Schools Football Association. **We are very proud of you Camron.**



**A massive thank you to the PTA for organising the Year 6 leavers disco.** This has been done with great care to ensure that no Covid rules were broken and everything has been done as safely as possible. Last year the Y6 children missed out on a great many milestones. This year we have ensured that they were able to have a Year 6 residential; enjoy putting together a Y6 production (this will be shared online) and had their leavers' disco. **Don't forget that we will be changing the format of the newsletter from September** to make it more accessible on phones and tablets like the well-being newsletter.



**I hope you all enjoy reading your children's reports today.** All children should bring home their reports today so please check their bags and make sure you've received it. If you'd like to discuss your child's report you are able to make an appointment to talk to their teacher.

As illustrated by the After-School Club at the Willows (Bungalow) having to close a bubble today, **we must continue to be vigilant and follow our Covid-19 controls.** So, thank you to those parents who are wearing masks when on site, the evidence is clear that wearing a mask or face covering offers protection to those around you and so by wearing a face covering you may be helping to alleviate the anxiety of those around you. Having to console children who have to miss events/birthday parties etc. is not something that we relish and so anything to reduce the chances of spreading the virus can only be a good thing. Thanks for your ongoing support.

**I hope you get a chance to enjoy the weather this weekend.**

## Covid-19 Update

I'm sure many of you are looking forward to the easing of national restrictions from Monday the 19<sup>th</sup> of July. There is continued debate in the media regarding the issue of face coverings in public and private spaces. It's important to recognise that Covid hasn't gone away and a great many people remain anxious about its effects and possible transmission. **Our current risk assessment will remain in force until the end of term.** This means we are asking any visitors on site to continue to wear face coverings. This is to reduce the risk of someone passing the virus onto someone else and also to reduce any potential anxiety people may be feeling. **If you are asked to wear a face covering please respect this** and remember it's about protecting other people not just yourself. Staff have been reminded several times about the importance of wearing face coverings and will continue to do so.

We have been asked about plans for the next academic year. We are waiting for the 'Operational Guidance' issued by the government to be updated however we anticipate having the following controls in place from September:

**Continued hand washing** and use of hand sanitizer; **increased ventilation** around the school by keeping windows and external doors open where safe to do so.

We will continue **with a soft start** but the playground gates will be open from **8:35am to 8:45am**. This is a smaller window but should still mean that parents & carers don't need to queue when dropping off children. We will continue with pick up times at 3:15pm with staff bringing each year group out to a different area. Y5 & Y6 parents will continue to be able to give permission for children to walk home alone or meet off site if they wish. Children who wish to wear face coverings will be allowed to do so when in class as long as it doesn't interfere with effective learning. We will also continue with **children coming into school in their PE kits** on their PE days.

We will of course share more detailed guidance and information next week and in advance of the start of the new academic year.

## Racial Equity

**This week's racial equity share is from Mrs Preston.**

### Keeping Up-To-Date

Being anti-racist means that you are actively, not passively, against racism. Anti-racism means that you examine your own behaviour regularly for racist thoughts or acts, and work on changing those thoughts or acts so that they are not racist.

There are many challenges to progressing on this journey. It can feel uncomfortable; **it is hard to look at yourself in this manner** when you have always classed yourself as someone who is a good person and someone who wouldn't hurt others. Not everyone will agree with you, and that is difficult if you, like me, prefer to avoid conflict. **It also takes a lot of work.** One of my biggest challenges this year has been finding the balance between how much time I have and the amount that I have to learn. As well as this, as a mum of



two boys, I am keen to ensure that the anti-racist work that I do has a positive impact on my parenting as well as my life at school.

Some of the most useful sources of information that I have found in past year are on Instagram. There is a great wealth of content provided by a plethora of contributors, who teach me daily and kept me up-to-date with the events and history that are all intrinsically linked to the institutionalised racism that we are all, whether we like it or not, a part of.

I have narrowed down the accounts that I follow to a more manageable list of five, and I would recommend you to give them a #followfriday if you too would like to learn a bit more.

### 1. The Conscious Kid

The Conscious Kid is an American education, research, and policy organization dedicated to equity and promoting healthy racial identity development in youth. They support organisations, families and educators in the U.S.A. in acting to disrupt racism in kids. They regularly post recommendations for children's books that can help to initiate conversations about racism with children.



### 2. Britt Hawthorne

Britt is an American anti-racist educator and teacher who runs workshops online for teachers and parents alike. I have not attended a workshop, but she regularly posts information about the 'big' issues, as well as day-to-day parenting advice. She is also a mum and delivers her content in an accessible and inclusive way.



### 3. The Black Curriculum

Founded by Lavinya Stennett in June 2019, they are a UK based team that have been on a mission to create fully rounded citizens through the education of Black British history, both in and out of schools. Their aim is to make British Black history a mandatory part of the curriculum (hard to believe that it is not already).



### 4. Everyday Racism

Everyday Racism is an organisation run by two sisters (Naomi and Natalie Evans) which began on Instagram as a platform to share stories from Black and Brown people about their experiences of racism. They are UK based and have a book out early next year titled 'The Mixed-Race Experience'.



### 5. Mimi Moffie Amsterdam

Mimi is a folk tale character designed by Nina Alberg, an artist originally from Curacao but currently living in Amsterdam. Nina's work is all about creating and she creates Mimi Moffie drawings for women who might feel underrepresented. They are often funny, always beautiful but sometimes she can use strong language (one for the grown-ups only).



## Parents' Forum

### EJS Parents Forum - new members needed!

From September we are looking for new members to join the Forum. The Forum meets for an hour once every half term with Mr Usher, to share the views, issues and compliments raised by parents. The meetings are also an opportunity for the school to gauge the opinion of parents.

**We are looking for new members including a Chair and note taker:**

Please contact [ejsparentsforum@gmail.com](mailto:ejsparentsforum@gmail.com) for further details.

## Online Safety

<https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/blog/staying-safe-online-summer-holidays>

**With the summer holidays fast approaching** children and young people will have more free time to spend with friends, family and online. For some, this will be spent using the internet to keep in touch with friends, catch up with the latest apps and online trends, and playing their favourite games. **This blog was written in 2017 but still contains some great tips and advice.**

- **Sit down together.**

The holidays are also a good opportunity to have positive conversations about the internet, so if something ever does upset your child online they would feel more confident in confiding in you

- **Social media and staying in touch.**

Encourage your children to use the privacy tools on the services they use, so that the content they post is only available to people they know and trust in real life.

- **Talking about their time online.**

**Take the 'Be the change' quiz** and help 8 – 13-year olds to explore how children and young people share images and videos online

- **Sharing holiday pictures.**

Talk to your children about what types of photos are appropriate to share, and who they are okay to share with. Photos can hold clues that give away personal information. For example, if you share a selfie of you and friends, are there any landmarks or street signs that give away your location?

- **Make a family agreement.**

**A family agreement** is a great way to start a conversation with your whole family about how you all use the internet and discuss together how to behave in a positive way when online at home, at school or at a friend's house.

To find out about the latest apps, games and social media sites your children may be interested in or already accessing go to: <https://www.net-aware.org.uk/networks/>.

## Ofsted Parent View



In advance of any possible visit from Ofsted in the coming year, it would be useful if parents could give their feelings about the school via Parent View. Parent View gives you the chance to tell Ofsted what you think about your child's school, from the quality of teaching to dealing with poor behaviour.

<https://parentview.ofsted.gov.uk/>

The survey can be completed at any time; you don't have to wait until the school is being inspected. **We only ask that if you do have any issues you raise them with us first so that we have a chance to address them.**

Or if you have any general feedback you can contact the Parents' Forum: [ejsparentsforum@gmail.com](mailto:ejsparentsforum@gmail.com)

## Dates for your Diary

### Summer Term

**19<sup>th</sup> July 2021** – Optional Report Consultation Meetings

**21<sup>st</sup> July 2021** – Last Day of Academic Year – **2pm finish**

### Autumn Term 2021-22

**1<sup>st</sup> Sept 2021** - Inset Day

**2<sup>nd</sup> Sept 2021** - 1<sup>st</sup> Day of term

**17<sup>th</sup> Sept 2021** – PTA Disco (Years 3&4 6.30pm to 7.45pm, Years 5&6 8.00pm to 9.15pm)

**20<sup>th</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup> Sep 2021** – Manor Week (Y6 residential)



**30<sup>th</sup> Sept 2021** – School Photo's  
**20<sup>th</sup> Oct 2021** – Flu Vaccinations  
**25<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> Oct 2021** - Half Term  
**1<sup>st</sup> Nov 2021** – Inset Day  
**3<sup>rd</sup> Dec 2021** – PTA Christmas Fair & Non-Uniform Day  
**10<sup>th</sup> Dec 2021** - Christmas Dinner/Christmas Jumper day  
**17<sup>th</sup> Dec 2021** - Last day of term

## EJS Governors

**Welcome to the last newsletter and governors update for the year.**

Generally, we would spend this time reflecting on progress during the year, but on this occasion, we would like to dedicate the update to a tribute to one of our most valued colleagues for what has been an arduous, but hopefully rewarding, term in governance.

**The time has come for us to say a huge Thank You to Bryan Williams**, who has decided to step down from the Vice Chair role at the end of this academic year. Bryan has been a Governor for over 10 years at Emmbrook Junior School (EJS) and will be fondly remembered and respected by all connected with the school for all his efforts and achievements.



The roles Bryan has performed as a Governor are too numerous to list but, most recently, he was the Vice-Chair of the Full Governing Body, the Chair of the Resources Committee and the Finance Working Group. He also led a number of critical activities and has supported me, as chair, throughout my term. His amazing knowledge of the Education Law and statutory requirements for the website, along with his keen eye for detail, has ensured that our finances stayed in control, our policies were updated and fit for purpose and our website contained the correct information to remain compliant as a school. Bryan's breadth of knowledge in the education sector and his ability to keep updated with all the legal and statutory changes never ceased to amaze and **we will all be so grateful and appreciative for this guidance.**

Over the many years of this tireless and diligent work, Bryan has worked with many different school staff members and a whole host of governors. He was always very patient and helpful in integrating and shaping everyone in the "Emmbrook" way and was a constant and consistent contact point for all colleagues throughout this period.

Thankfully, Bryan has agreed to stay on for another year as an Associate Governor so we can all continue to tap into his extensive knowledge and experience. However, we know that Bryan has many outside interests and will become ever more involved in his love for nature.

**THANK YOU, BRYAN, FROM ALL AT EJS!**

In other news from the board, **we would also like to thank Pavitra Aroon and Ann Tigerstedt** for their support in the Governing Board as they step down.

These colleague changes have led to a restructure and I would like to introduce Christine Mitchell as the new Vice Chair of the Full Governing Board (FGB), Keith Perkins is the new Chair of the Resources Committee and Matt Butchers as Chair of Pupil Outcomes, Parent Communication and Curriculum (POPC) Committee. There will also be some vacancies from September as we require a new Parent Governor and a Co-opted Governor. We aim to send out the Parent Governor advert in September (you will be required to apply to the role and be subject to a parent vote) and a co-opted Governor advert in the summer holidays. So please do have a think about whether you are interested in joining the team.

Finally, we would like to congratulate and thank the whole staff and children for the amazing progress that was evident when we came in for our Governors' Day on Tuesday!

**We are truly proud of your achievements this year!**