

Newsletter from the governing body – summer 2023

Dear parents and carers

We are reaching the end of another school year, so as a governing body we wanted to share with you some of the highlights of the 2022-23 academic year for our school and its pupils.

In their second year of their leadership, Natalie, Sally, as Co-Heads and Rosie as Deputy Headteacher have built on the traditions of Eleanor Palmer (EP) as an inclusive community and stamped their own open and aspirational style on the running of the school.

There have been many successes across the curriculum and community. Highlights for pupils include the brilliant results across the Juniors in the National Engineering Awards; the UKMT maths challenges; and Year 6 joining Camden's Music Festival at the Royal Albert Hall. EP is continuing our partnerships with – amongst others - the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, the Place Dance School, South Hampstead School on Latin and MFL and a new initiative on debating class for Y5 and Y6 which fits so well with the school's work on oracy. The Summer Concert, our Y3 Southbank project (which ended with the class story being published) and a new trip to Folkestone were just a few of the many highlights that show EP's ongoing commitment to curriculum enrichment and connected knowledge.

We've continued to see the return of many treasured EP traditions post-COVID and the development of some new ones – for example, the wonderful and inspiring Run Kids Run. Thanks, as always, are due to the staff and to parents and especially our dedicated PTA team for organising and running the events of the school year. They contribute so much to Eleanor Palmer's great sense of community and to enriching the many and varied educational experiences of our pupils through the fundraising efforts of 'Keep It EP'. We believe that the recent decision on teacher pay means that the national increases will be funded at school level, but we will need to remain vigilant on our budget to maintain our site and our provision. We are very fortunate to have the new 'Pod' up and running (near the bike area) which provides a welcome quiet space for pupils and small groups.

One fantastic achievement for the school and staff is that EP has been chosen – after a national competition - as a partner in the new EEF North London Research School alliance, together with local primaries Brecknock/Torriano and Parliament Hill secondary school. The Research School network currently numbers only 38 schools across England which work with the other schools in their areas to help them use evidence more effectively to inform their teaching. This is testimony to EP's great track record over the years on not only developing its own teaching expertise but also collaborating with other schools and teachers. The work will start in September and is an exciting opportunity for developing staff and making new partnerships.

We end the year with excellent outcomes from the national tests for reading, writing and maths (SATs) in both Year 6 and Year 2, phonics in Year 1, and the Multiplication check in Year 4. We will give more detail when the national picture on attainment and progress come through in the Autumn but these results are testimony

to the tireless efforts and focus of the entire teaching team, leadership and, of course, our pupils.

As usual, we are enclosing the results of the annual parent survey with this newsletter. The governing body discussed the results at our recent meeting, and reflected on the messages we received and on the progress made in response to issues reflected in last year's survey.

Last year, there was a dip in perceptions of pupil progress and communication about support for their learning needs and as a governing body we decided this should be a focus for the school. One of the innovations introduced by the head teachers was the introduction of parent meetings focused on progress, with annual reports being written earlier in the year. We believe that this enabled parents to see how well the staff know individual pupils and the provision they need to progress. Similarly, there has been a whole school focus on behaviour that supports learning, with the "Ready, Respectful, Safe" standard, the revised positive behaviour policy and the well-being curriculum.

The headlines from this year are that parents are very satisfied with the leadership and teaching at the school and feel that their child is happy and safe here. There does not appear to be a particular issue of concern arising from the survey this year but the school will continue its drive on communication with parents, with special reference to parents of children with special educational needs.

We have two new parent governors starting in September after the recent election, taking the place of Charlie Condou and Nanouche Umeadi who made a tremendous contribution over their time on the governing body.

The governing body would like to wish Rosie Thompson, our brilliant deputy head, well for her upcoming maternity leave. We are also saying goodbye to Anis who has been supporting Reception. Thanks to her for all she has contributed to the school and we wish her well for her next endeavours.

Finally, this is my last newsletter as Chair of Governors. After 7 years in the role, I'm stepping down and handing it on to Christophe Frèrebeau (dad to Timothee in Y5 and Arthur in Reception) who is an experienced and gifted governor and will be an excellent Chair.

We wish you all a happy summer break.

Jen Allan and the EPS governing body

Parent Questionnaire 2023

We received responses from 105 out of our 170 families. This is an improvement from 99 in 2022 and we will seek to continue to improve on the level of returns from parents in 2024.

Highlights

Once again, parents and carers are very positive in their assessment of the school. Overall, 98% are happy with their child's experience, they are confident that the school is led and managed effectively (96%) and that teaching is good (96%). They agree that their child is safe (100%) and that their child enjoys school (99%).

When reading the results, compared to previous years (including pre-COVID 2019) the school is performing better or on par in all areas and there is no clear pattern of concerns.

There are five areas where the school did not perform as well as last year. There was a decrease of 1 percentage point on 'my child enjoys school', on 'the school works to be inclusive of children of all abilities and backgrounds'; a decrease of 2 percentage points on 'the school is led and managed effectively' and 'overall I am happy with my child's experience at this school'; and a decrease of 3 percentage points on 'the teaching is good at this school' and 'the school makes sure my child is well prepared for the future'.

This year saw a slight improvement (1 percentage point) in parent perception of 'the school keeps my child safe' and 'the school keeps me informed about my child's progress'. There was also an increase (2pp) in 'the school helps me to support my child's learning' and 'the school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle', and an increase in parental agreement (by between 4-6 percentage points) to the statements 'the school takes account of my suggestions and concerns', 'the school takes account of pupil views', 'the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour' and 'my child is making enough progress at school'.

When parents disagreed, we asked them to elaborate in text boxes. This was a very useful exercise, and we have discussed the feedback in our committee and full governing body meeting.

Key points

The key points discussed at the July full Governing Body meeting included:

- that improved communication with parents and carers on their child's progress (and what parents and carers can do to support their child's learning) had been reflected in the parent survey this year;
- that the school focus this year on management of behaviour to ensure a positive learning environment and wellbeing for all children in a class had made some impact and should be continued;
- that the school would be refreshing its focus on science and maths (particularly problem solving); and
- the school would continue to emphasise to parents the importance of regular pupil attendance.

Through this challenging year, school staff have again won parents' overwhelming appreciation and deserve congratulations for pulling together and offering a continued return to a real "EP" education.

2. Summary table: all figures are percentages (%)

QUESTION	2023			2022			2021		
	Agree	Disagree	N/A	Agree	Disagree	N/A	Agree	Disagree	N/A
My child enjoys school	99	1	0	100	0	0	99	1	0
The school keeps my child safe	100	0	0	99	1	0	99	1	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	95	5	0	94	6	0	96	4	0
My child is making enough progress at school	97	3	0	91	8	1	97	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	96	3	1	99	0	1	99	1	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	96	4	0	94	6	0	97	3	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	94	3	3	92	6	2	96	4	0
The school makes sure my child is well prepared for the future	87	5	9	90	5	5	92	1	8
The school meets my child's particular needs	92	6	2	88	5	7	94	3	3
The school works to be inclusive of children of all abilities and backgrounds	95	2	3	96	0	4	95	3	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	85	6	10	80	7	13	82	5	13
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	92	3	5	88	5	7	89	5	5
The school takes account of pupils' views	90	3	8	85	1	14	94	1	5
The school is led and managed effectively	96	4	0	98	0	2	100	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	98	2	0	100	0	2	99	1	0
The school wellbeing provision is good	96	0	4						
The school team develops positive behaviour	97	2	1						

	2023		2022	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Has your child attended Club EP (after school playcentre) this year?	63	37	62	38
Have you been satisfied with activities provided at the after school club?	91	9	87	9
Are you aware of the school's wellbeing curriculum?	68	32		